
2024 Future Health Index: Healthcare Leaders Use AI to Address Patient Care Gaps



- Healthcare leaders indicate AI and automation are crucial in addressing staff shortages, but staff remain skeptical
- Interest in Generative AI grows, with majority of health leaders investing in, or planning to invest in AI technologies to help reduce delays in patient care

[Royal Philips](#), a global leader in health technology, today announced the results of its [Future Health Index 2024](#) report: *Better care for more people*. Launched at [HLTH Europe](#), the ninth annual FHI global report shows that healthcare leaders are turning to virtual care and AI-enabled innovation to address pressure due to workforce shortages, financial burdens, and growing demand.

“Increasingly, we’re seeing long wait times and staff shortages making it difficult for people to get timely access to care when and where needed. The Future Health Index 2024 global findings show health leaders believe these barriers to access to quality care are getting larger,” said [Shez Partovi](#), Chief Innovation & Strategy Officer at Philips. “This year’s report shows how innovations including AI are helping to free up time for staff and reduce wait times for patients. However, as health systems roll out AI tools to save time and reduce barriers to care, it’s critical to bring staff along on the journey to ensure an inclusive AI rollout with patient and clinician experience is at the forefront.”

Staff Shortages are Taking a Heavy Toll on Healthcare Professionals and Patients

Almost two-thirds (66%) of healthcare leaders report increased incidence of burnout, stress, and mental health issues in their workforce, deterioration of work-life balance, and/or reduced morale and engagement. Delays in care due to staff shortages are an issue for more than three in four healthcare leaders (77%) – causing concerns about increased waiting lists for appointments (60%), longer waiting times for treatments or procedures (57%), or delayed or limited access to screening, diagnosis, and preventive care (54%).

Automation can Help Ease the Burden on Staff

Most healthcare leaders (92%) agree that using technology to automate repetitive tasks or processes is critical for addressing staff shortages in healthcare. However, nearly two-thirds (65%) say healthcare professionals are skeptical about its use. Concerns were raised around automation and quality assurance and the potential for overreliance on automation leading to staff losing essential skills and knowledge. Today, automation mainly reduces the administrative burden; however, two in five (41%) healthcare leaders plan to implement it for workflow prioritization.

Virtual care may also help bridge the staffing gap, with 89% of leaders already seeing a positive impact of virtual care in easing shortages. Leaders also see benefits for staff satisfaction with more than half (54%) saying virtual care enables more flexible work schedules and creates new career options for healthcare professionals.

Patients also benefit from remote monitoring which can offer more positive experiences while reducing the strain on overstretched hospital staff. Leaders see a bigger role for remote patient monitoring in the future and are planning an expansion into areas such as telestroke care (40%), maternal and fetal health (36%), and postoperative monitoring (35%) within the next three years.

Health Leaders Keenly Interested in Generative AI

Last year’s report showed leaders were planning investments in AI; however, the FHI 2024 results show AI for clinical decision support is already being leveraged for in-hospital patient monitoring (43%), with more investments planned in the next three years. Additionally, the majority of

leaders (85%) are currently investing in, or planning to invest in, generative AI technologies.

Financial Challenges Must be Addressed Through Sustainable Strategies

The vast majority (81%) of leaders note that financial challenges are having a direct impact on patients. Almost 3 in 5 (59%) are unable to invest in new or more advanced medical equipment or technologies. At the same time, 89% are planning growth strategies to serve more patients or expand services. Additionally, 86% of healthcare leaders also believe that reducing CO2 emissions and the environmental impact of healthcare should be a top priority for healthcare organisations, meaning that any strategies to address financial challenges must be sustainable.

The FHI 2024 report is based on proprietary research among 3,000 healthcare leaders conducted in 14 countries. To access this year's report, visit [Future Health Index 2024](#).

Source & Image Credit: [Royal Philips](#)

Published on : Tue, 18 Jun 2024