

Top Five Trends for 2022: Your Hospital's Guide to Improved Performance



What is your hospital's top post-acute focus for 2022? From talent retention to market expansion, there are often competing priorities.

The rapidly changing healthcare environment makes it challenging to strategically align focus with the growing opportunity in local communities. According to a recent *Deloitte/Fortune* survey, CEOs are expecting strong growth fueled by innovation and pent-up consumer demand. Further, there will be an intense focus on market expansion, as well as optimizing new workplace models to attract and retain top healthcare talent.¹

Read this guide to learn the top trends in healthcare for 2022 with analysis from industry leaders including Deloitte and Fortune. Also, hear from Kindred Rehabilitation Services' Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr. Sally Brooks on how



these trends are impacting health systems. Dr. Brooks pulls from Kindred's experience as a strategic partner to more than 150 of the top hospitals across the country.

The top five post-acute trends include:

1 Rapid rise of staff shortages and burnout



In a *Fortune/Deloitte* survey, health system CEOs noted that their biggest obstacle in the upcoming year is staff recruitment and retention.¹ However, before addressing this issue it is critical to understand the short- and long-term outlook of staffing challenges and the strategies needed to address them as a whole.

“The overall outlook of the healthcare staffing shortage is grim, but can be substantially improved if prompt action is taken within a hospital,” stated Dr. Sally Brooks. “For the short-term outlook, staff are simply burned out from COVID's impact and the continued strain on bed capacity and nursing ratios. The long-term outlook should be viewed as a national priority as health systems need to determine if they can deliver the same high-quality care with constrained resources.”

According to Dr. Brooks, employees need to see and understand the value they bring to the organization. They can feel supported through educational and support programs as well as emotional and cultural resources.

Taking these steps can ultimately help create exceptional outcomes for patients and the hospital. “Although pay is a major factor within staff retention efforts, it is not the only thing keeping staff within the same care organization.

Staff want to feel like they are being nurtured professionally and cared for personally because if there is one thing COVID-19 has taught us, it's that mental and emotional support is vital for long-term health, especially among our healthcare workers.”

Dr. Brooks also emphasized the need to invest in employee training and education. Doing so will enable staff to keep up with the growing complexities within the patient population, earn higher wages and streamline their approach within their hospital's care team.

2 Evolution and continued growth of telehealth



A host of waivers made available throughout the pandemic helped break down the barriers to telehealth access. This innovation helped enable patients, regardless of location and illness, to receive prompt care during a time of hospital restrictions.

Now that health systems are adjusting to COVID's impact, the long-term availability and access to telehealth services is a top

priority for hospital integration beyond the public health emergency. “Telehealth will most definitely remain a strategy within a hospital's care continuum,” stated Dr. Brooks. “This is especially true within local communities where ongoing provider shortages make telehealth a vital strategy to help ensure patients can access necessary care.”

Looking ahead, health systems should expect continued growth within the telehealth and tech innovation space. “We will start to see variations of telehealth and telemedicine services such as telepsychology within the behavioral health landscape, and telephysical and occupational therapies that are able to follow patients after they have been discharged home from an inpatient rehabilitation facility. These patient-centered solutions will extend far beyond the public health emergency,” Dr. Brooks said.

A recent report by the Advisory Board highlights that in order to meet the care needs of the post-acute population while coping with ongoing staffing shortages, health systems should

consider a strategic partnership. Doing so can help finance digital, home-based and other innovative solutions resulting in improved outcomes.²

3 Increased need for post-acute services aiding medically complex, COVID-19 and “long-hauler” patients

Post-acute care continues to serve as one of the leading methods of care for medically complex, COVID-19 and “long-hauler” patients.

Additionally, certain post-acute services,

such as acute rehabilitation, are specifically designed to treat the complexities of today's growing patient population, especially for those who spent extended

time in a hospital and require aggressive interventions to regain function. This form of care differs from lower levels of care such as skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) and home health, making it valuable and increasingly necessary across a hospital's care continuum.

Additional benefits of integrating post-acute services into a hospital's care continuum include:

Additional benefits of integrating post-acute services into a hospital's care continuum include:

- **Increased clinical and quality effectiveness.**

Inpatient rehabilitation is known for producing exceptional clinical and quality outcomes, and reducing hospital readmission rates – benefiting the hospital as a whole.

- **Streamlined interdisciplinary team approach.**

Specialized care requires expertise from specialized clinicians, including highly-trained medical directors. Having the expertise within the hospital's care continuum reduces the opportunity for errors while improving care consistency and transitions.

- **Improved patient throughput management.**

Having inpatient rehabilitation and other post-acute services available within a system's care continuum helps ensure that patients receive the right form of care at the right time in their care journey and stay for the appropriate amount of time. This frees up needed space and allows patients to efficiently and effectively progress in their recovery.



4 Demand for co-location and flexibility as patient needs shift

Co-location, or the integration of multiple care settings on one hospital – or health system – campus, will continue to see substantial growth. Having a streamlined care approach within the hospital is crucial for patient and hospital outcomes as well as overall hospital flexibility.



“When you pair post-acute services under the same roof, you enable patients to reap the benefits of multiple specialty offerings without having to transfer them outside of the system,” stated Dr. Brooks. “For example, when you have acute rehabilitation and long-term acute care in

the same hospital, physicians can spread their skillset across service lines. This not only increases flexibility for staff, but can ultimately reduce patient readmission risk and care costs. A win-win for everyone.”

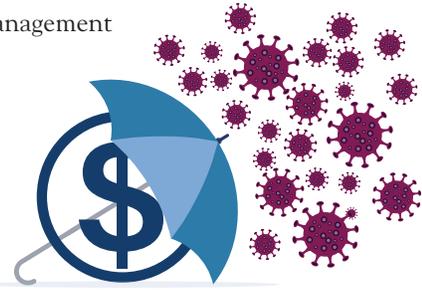
Implementing the co-location model in a hospital’s care continuum opens the door for additional growth and success. When a hospital can help ensure a patient receives the vital services needed to achieve their recovery goals all within the same health system, factors such as reputation, service optimization and financial stability are strengthened.

5 Financial stability after COVID-19

Eighty percent of healthcare executives noted that the largest priority for their hospital was financial stability when looking at their strategic plans for the upcoming year, according to a

recent Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA) survey.³

“The shift to value-based care has pushed hospitals to reduce spending while improving quality and outcomes,” stated Dr. Brooks. “Health systems are still experiencing a substantial decline in patient volume due to patients foregoing critical treatment.”



As managed care and other value-based reimbursement becomes a bigger part of the equation, it will be even more important to conduct care in a way that makes the most of the limited funds health systems are given. One of the ways hospitals are able to achieve this is through a strategic partnership.

A strategic post-acute partnership strategy can aid in a successful transition to value-based care and help equip hospital staff and leadership with the resources to increase care quality and efficiency. This can help lead to reduced readmission risk and long-term cost savings for the entire health system.

Post-acute partnership’s role in a hospital’s 2022 plans

Among the healthcare trends for 2022, there is a common denominator that can help C-suite professionals stay ahead of these trends. When key business opportunities are captured with the help of an experienced and focused post-acute partner, the entire hospital can reap the benefits.

Through a history of successful joint-venture partnerships and management agreements, Kindred works with health systems to more effectively meet the needs of their patients, maintain employee satisfaction and generate long-term quality outcomes for their organization.

To learn how Kindred can help your hospital meet the growing opportunities and stay ahead of future trends, visit [KindredRehab.com](https://www.kindredrehab.com).

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