

Massachusetts Health Care and Human Services Workforce Survey 2025 Survey Results

Introduction

The biennial Massachusetts Health Care and Human Services Workforce Survey (MHCW), first fielded in 2023, collects information on staffing capacity and diversity in the health care and human services sectors in Massachusetts. The survey provides a critical fact base to monitor workforce trends and inform state policies and programs. CHIA partners with provider and trade associations, provider organizations, workforce content experts, and sister agencies to identify topics and occupations that are most relevant for each sector. Provider organizations in the following sectors were contacted for participation:

- Adult Day Health Services
- Ambulatory Surgery Centers
- Outpatient Behavioral Health (Association for Behavioral Healthcare members)
- Behavioral Health Hospitals
- Community Health Centers
- Dental Practices
- Emergency Medical Services
- Home Health Care
- Human Services
- Acute Care Hospitals
- Primary Care
- Public Hospitals
- Nursing Homes

The MHCW collects both quantitative and qualitative workforce information, including demographic composition of staff, capacity measures, recruitment and retention challenges and strategies, and impacts on access to care due to workforce challenges. CHIA made strategic refinements to the 2025 survey to improve data quality and standardize results. The web-based survey was fielded in both health care and human services sectors from February to July 2025. The survey was completed by human resources directors and administrators who were asked to respond on behalf of their organization.

Results from this survey are available in a [comprehensive dashboard](#). Users can view both sector-specific and cross-sector results within the dashboard. Sector-specific results offer information on the following topics:

- Employee composition by occupation
- Employee racial and ethnic composition for leadership and select occupations
- Vacancy and turnover rates by occupation
- Challenges to recruitment and retention by occupation
- Most effective organizational strategies to facilitate recruitment and retention
- Impacts on access due to workforce shortages

Cross-sector aggregated results are presented to facilitate comparisons across sectors. This analysis includes the same metrics from the sector-specific dashboards for common occupations including physicians, registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), direct care workers, and social workers.

Key Findings

About one-quarter of employees in leadership positions (26%) were members of a racial/ethnic minority group across all sectors, ranging from 2% in emergency medical services to 45% in dental practices. Direct care workers were the most racially and ethnically diverse occupation; 73% of direct care workers were members of a racial or ethnic minority group across all sectors.

LPNs had the highest vacancy rates in private human services operators (26%), acute care hospitals (18%), and home health agencies (18%). They had the highest full-time turnover rate in nursing homes (36%), private human services operators (33%), and ambulatory surgery centers (30%).

RNs had the highest vacancy rates in nursing homes (26%), public hospitals (14%), and private human services operators (13%). Nearly 80% of nursing homes identified RN as the single most difficult role to recruit, with most organizations (77%) facing a shortage of eligible applicants for positions.

Physicians had the highest vacancy rates in community health centers (11%) and the highest turnover rate among full-time employees in acute care hospitals (12%). Most community health centers (66%) reported non-competitive salary as a challenge to recruitment of physicians whereas more than half of acute care hospitals (55%) reported burnout as a challenge to retention.

Direct care workers had the highest vacancy rates in private human services operators (14%), nursing homes (11%), and home health agencies (11%). They had the highest full-time turnover rates in nursing homes (35%) and private human services operators (31%).

Social workers had the highest vacancy rates (both 21%) and full-time turnover rates (27% and 30%) in adult day health and nursing homes, respectively.

Increasing wages was the most effective strategy used by most organizations to recruit and retain employees across all sectors. Public hospitals also identified expanded internal training opportunities as an effective strategy for recruitment and retention.

