



C-suite: Key Challenges in Coming Year



Healthcare executives say staffing shortages and rising prescription drug costs are among the leading challenges they have to contend with in 2017, according to a new survey by Premiere Inc. Another major concern is "interoperability", with nearly 60 percent of those surveyed saying their organisations are unable to access ambulatory data from their affiliated (nonemployed) physician network.

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As part of its semi-annual report, The Economic Outlook, Premiere surveyed 52 health system C-suite executives across the U.S. on the biggest issues facing their organisations and supply chains as a whole.

Based on the results, their number one concern is staffing shortages. Among those surveyed, 72 percent report that the supply of primary care physicians is inadequate to meet their needs over the next three years. In addition, 51 percent say they don't have enough healthcare extenders, such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

Drug costs and shortages are also a major worry for healthcare execs. More than 90 percent of respondents said price increases for pharmaceuticals and drug shortages are significant challenges for their organisations. To combat the problem, some hospitals use electronic medical record systems to prompt doctors to consider whether the drugs they plan to prescribe are too expensive.

The nationwide study also indicates that interoperability continues to be a challenge as well. Fifty-nine percent of respondents say their organisations aren't successfully using telemedicine for primary care visits. They also note that reimbursement and regulatory hurdles prevent the widespread use of telemedicine.

Other key findings include:

- 95 percent report operational and cultural issues around mergers and acquisitions, a key factor that can hinder physician productivity and integration efforts
- 60 percent report an increase in their capital budgets this year compared to the previous year
- 70 percent say that healthcare IT is a key area for capital investment, a trend that has persisted for the sixth year in a row, Premier reports.

Source: FierceHealthcare
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