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Clinician retention and satisfaction have never been more important, with hospital executives identifying workforce challenges as the No. 1 priority for the first time in 16 years, said Medical Solutions' Client Executive Ryan Lamb in a Feb. 14 webinar. Medical Solutions is a leading healthcare talent ecosystem provider and an [IHA Strategic Partner](#) since 2018.

The webinar, "[How to Retain and Energize Your Nurses](#)," also featured Donald Sull, MIT Sloan School of Management professor, who co-founded the consulting firm CultureX that uses artificial intelligence to improve organizational culture.

With clinician demand expected to grow by over 9% this year—just to keep up with the country's aging population—Sull noted that the nursing crisis is often framed as a nursing shortage. While the crisis often manifests itself as a shortage, it's "really a crisis of dissatisfaction," Sull said in the [webinar recording](#).

Based on comments and Glassdoor reviews of over 150,000 U.S. nurses, Sull identified key ways to improve nurse satisfaction:

- Analyze nurse insights and ratings to assess employee satisfaction;
- Benchmark and prioritize drivers of job satisfaction;
- Lean into your organization's strengths to attract and retain workers;
- Leverage industry partnerships to adapt best practices; and
- Translate feedback and take action to build trust.

As a managed services provider, Medical Solutions' healthcare talent ecosystem provides comprehensive solutions to fit your workforce needs. To learn more about Medical Solutions, contact Tony Lehman at 402-295-3600 or tony.lehman@medicalsolutions.com.

[Contact us](#) with questions.

[Helping Patients Manage Rx Costs Despite Reduced 340B Drug Savings](#)

Drug cost savings that allow Memorial Hospital in Chester to offer free community programs and services, and make facility and equipment upgrades, have dropped by 52% in just three years. Despite the loss of over \$400,000 in drug cost savings since 2020, the hospital still provided \$90,000 in free or reduced-cost healthcare and \$86,000 in prescription savings for patients in 2023.

The stark decline in drug costs savings wouldn't have happened if pharmaceutical companies had complied with the federal government's 340B drug discount program, enacted in 1992. The program requires pharmaceutical manufacturers to sell drugs at discounted rates to healthcare organizations, including hospitals caring for a disproportionate share of uninsured and low-income patients.

About 20% of Chester residents live in poverty, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and the city's per capita income was just over \$22,000 between 2018-2022. Drugmakers have recently limited access to lifesaving drugs or placed conditions that restrict 340B hospitals from distributing discounted drugs through contract pharmacies.

Most patients who can't afford their prescription costs need blood thinners to maintain heart health and insulin or other medications to manage diabetes. One patient told hospital staff he was using some of his son's insulin because he couldn't afford his own prescription. Once the hospital stepped in—leveraging the 340B program—the patient got his own prescription at a reduced cost, and both father and son can now better manage their chronic condition.

According to Memorial Hospital leaders, the 340B program helps improve patient compliance with taking medication needed for optimal health, which reduces emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations, as well as the cost of healthcare for all.

IHA is advocating for [Senate Bill 3727](#) to prohibit drugmakers from interfering with hospital pharmacy contracts. See our 340B [landing page](#), "Increasing Access to Affordable Drugs," for more hospital stories, and an [infographic](#) and [fact sheet](#) on the impact of drugmaker restrictions.

[Contact us](#) with questions.

Cyber Alerts, Recommended Actions Related to APT29 and ALPHV Blackcat

The FBI, National Security Agency (NSA), U.S. Cyber Command and international partners yesterday released a joint [Cybersecurity Advisory](#) to warn of Russian state-sponsored cyber actors' use of compromised Ubiquiti EdgeRouters to facilitate malicious cyber operations worldwide. The advisory provides observed tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), indicators of compromise (IOCs), and recommendations to mitigate the threat posed by APT28 threat actors related to compromised EdgeRouters.

Also this week, the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released a separate [Cybersecurity Advisory](#) in conjunction with the NSA, FBI and international partners, detailing TTPs of the group commonly known as APT29, a Russian cyber-espionage group that has executed cyberattacks targeting critical cloud-based services of critical U.S. infrastructure.

Yesterday, the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services also announced the release of a joint [Cybersecurity Advisory](#) from the FBI and CISA, offering updated TTPs and IOCs associated with the ALPHV Blackcat ransomware as a service that have been identified through FBI investigations as recently as February 2024. This advisory provides updates to the FBI's [FLASH BlackCat/ALPHV Ransomware Indicators of Compromise](#) released April 19, 2022, and to the [advisory](#) released Dec. 19, 2023. ALPHV Blackcat actors have since employed improvised communication methods by creating victim-specific emails to notify of the initial compromise. Since mid-December 2023, of the nearly 70 leaked victims, the healthcare sector has been the most commonly victimized. This is likely in response to the ALPHV Blackcat administrator's post encouraging its affiliates to target hospitals after operational action against the group and its infrastructure in early December 2023.

White House Dedicates \$1.7B to End Hunger, Promote Health

Yesterday, the White House [announced](#) a national White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities program, an initiative that aims to eliminate hunger and reduce diet-related diseases by 2023. Stakeholders, representing 140 health systems, insurers, companies, nonprofits, philanthropic groups, academia and local elected officials across the nation, have dedicated more than \$1.7 billion to advance this goal of improving nutrition and overall health—all while reducing health disparities. [Click here](#) to view the full list of commitments.

The \$1.7 billion in new commitments announced Feb. 27 build on \$8 billion in previous commitments [announced](#) at the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health—held for the first time in 50 years in September 2022, which compliment ongoing work to implement the [National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#).

COVID-19 Information

The Illinois Dept. of Public Health (IDPH) has launched a weekly [Infectious Respiratory Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#) that will be updated weekly on Friday. This report provides the public with the latest data on hospital visits, seasonal trends, lab test positivity and demographic data.

[Click here](#) to visit the IDPH COVID-19 resources webpage. IDPH will continue to report the weekly number of people with COVID-19 admitted to hospitals from emergency departments, deaths and vaccinations, with COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus information also reported through the dashboard of the [Illinois Wastewater Surveillance System](#).

Briefly Noted

Four eye ointment products have been recalled due to “lack of sterility assurance” at the facility in which they were manufactured, according to a Food and Drug Administration [announcement](#) posted Monday. The risk statement noted that there is “potential risk of eye infections or related harm” for patients who use these products. These products were distributed nationwide to wholesalers, retailers, and via the product distributor, Walmart, CVS and AACE Pharmaceuticals Inc.

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