



# Building a Culture of Radical Transparency for HR in Healthcare

*Action Plan*

2025

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# Introduction

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The healthcare industry faces exceptional challenges in information sharing, balancing patient confidentiality with the need for operational clarity. Brandon Hall Group™ research reveals that traditional models of selective information sharing are insufficient to meet employee expectations in healthcare organizations. Staff at all levels — from clinical professionals to administrative personnel — increasingly demand greater insight into organizational decision-making.

This action plan provides healthcare HR leaders with a framework for implementing radical transparency while addressing the specific complexities of medical environments. By developing thoughtful approaches to information sharing, healthcare organizations can build trust, improve retention of clinical talent, enhance patient care through better staff coordination, and create a more engaged workforce.

All data in this action plan come from proprietary research by Brandon Hall Group™.

## The Strategic Imperative

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With many medical facilities experiencing staffing shortages and burnout concerns, effective communication has never been more crucial. Research shows significant gaps between current practices and healthcare employee expectations, necessitating a reimagined approach to information sharing. Healthcare organizations that implement transparency initiatives can:

- ▶ Attract and retain clinical talent by demonstrating authentic commitment to openness, especially important in addressing the ongoing healthcare staffing crisis.
- ▶ Drive innovation in patient care through increased information sharing among interdisciplinary teams.
- ▶ Build stronger alignment with organizational mission and values through clear communication.
- ▶ Reduce workplace friction in high-stress medical environments by eliminating information gaps.
- ▶ Enable data-driven decision making at all levels, from administrative staff to clinicians.

The success of these initiatives hinges on creating a cultural shift that embraces openness while maintaining appropriate protection for patient information and sensitive healthcare data. For medical facilities, this balance is particularly delicate but increasingly necessary.

# Call to Action

Transparency must permeate every aspect of how healthcare HR operates and communicates. This transformation requires thoughtful implementation with particular attention to the unique aspects of healthcare environments. Transparency should include how:

- ▶ Clinical performance and patient outcomes are evaluated and discussed.
- ▶ Compensation decisions are made across different medical specialties and roles.
- ▶ Organizational changes affecting patient care delivery are planned and announced.
- ▶ Feedback is gathered and utilized from both patients and healthcare staff.
- ▶ HR data and metrics related to staffing, retention, and recruitment are shared.

Following implementation, healthcare organizations must maintain vigilance to ensure these changes become permanently embedded rather than remaining surface-level modifications. The healthcare industry's structured hierarchy and traditional communication patterns may present unique challenges, but the potential benefits for staff engagement and patient care quality make this transformation essential.

## Current State

Brandon Hall Group's data reveals significant gaps in healthcare organizations between aspirations and reality in information sharing and communication:



Only 45% of organizations, including healthcare organizations, report that individuals treat different ideas and opinions with respect, creating barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration essential for patient care.



A mere 27% believe managers consistently demonstrate commitment to organizational principles, undermining trust in leadership decisions that affect patient care.



Just 45% report that their leadership team's diversity reflects workforce composition, limiting perspective in a field serving diverse patient populations.

Organizations must acknowledge these gaps while developing strategies to address them in ways that respect the unique constraints and opportunities of medical environments.

# Implementation Framework

## Strategy Development and Goal Setting: Months 1 to 3

- ▶ Healthcare organizations require a carefully phased approach to transparency that builds trust while managing risk. In the initial phase, HR leaders should assess the current state of transparency within the organization, paying particular attention to clinical/non-clinical communication barriers. They must define appropriate boundaries that respect patient confidentiality while maximizing organizational transparency, and develop communication protocols tailored to different stakeholder groups including physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, and administrative staff.
- ▶ This foundation-building phase should examine how transparency initiatives might affect patient care processes. Organizations should identify areas where increased information sharing could positively impact patient outcomes and staff satisfaction, such as shift scheduling, resource allocation or performance feedback. The goal-setting process should establish metrics for success that reflect healthcare priorities — patient satisfaction, staff retention (particularly for high-demand roles like nursing), and quality of care measures — aligning transparency goals with clinical outcomes to demonstrate value beyond administrative improvement.

## Process Enhancement and Optimization: Months 4 to 6

- ▶ In the second phase, healthcare organizations should launch pilot transparency programs in lower-risk areas, such as administrative processes or non-clinical departments. They should gather feedback with attention to how these initiatives affect different healthcare roles, refine approaches based on learnings before expanding to clinical areas, and address healthcare-specific challenges to information sharing.
- ▶ Process enhancement must account for regulatory requirements like HIPAA and accreditation standards. HR departments should work with compliance teams to ensure transparency initiatives support rather than conflict with these obligations, developing clear guidelines for what information can be shared, with whom, and through what channels. Special attention should be paid to optimizing transparency around scheduling, compensation, and career advancement—areas that significantly impact healthcare worker satisfaction and retention.

## Partnership Building and Community Engagement: Months 7 to 12

- ▶ Successful implementation requires strong partnerships across the healthcare ecosystem. Organizations should engage physician leaders and nursing directors as champions for transparency initiatives and create structured opportunities for cross-functional collaboration. They should leverage existing medical staff committees and nursing councils to promote open communication while connecting transparency efforts to patient-centered care principles.
- ▶ Healthcare organizations should consider extending transparency initiatives to community engagement through more open communication about quality metrics, staffing levels or facility improvements. This approach builds trust with patients and strengthens organizational reputation. Internal partnerships between HR and clinical departments are crucial, with HR professionals working alongside clinical leaders to ensure transparency initiatives respect the unique aspects of clinical work while promoting greater openness.

## Training and Capability Development

Healthcare professionals require specific training to effectively participate in a transparent culture. Organizations should develop programs addressing healthcare-specific communication challenges and provide leaders with tools for transparent communication during difficult situations such as adverse events or staffing changes. They must build capability for constructive dialogue across professional boundaries and train managers on transparent performance feedback methods appropriate for clinical settings.

Training should acknowledge healthcare's hierarchical traditions while providing tools to create more open communication within that structure, including guidance for physician-nurse communication and interdisciplinary team meetings. Capabilities should extend beyond communication to include data literacy, enabling staff at all levels to understand and utilize information being shared transparently, particularly clinical quality data, staffing metrics, and patient satisfaction information.

## Measurement and Accountability Systems

Healthcare organizations must measure transparency impact. This includes implementing regular pulse surveys to assess perceived transparency among different staff groups, tracking correlations between transparency measures and patient outcomes, monitoring how increased information sharing affects clinical decision-making, and creating accountability mechanisms that encourage continued progress.

Measurement systems should connect transparency metrics to key performance indicators in healthcare, including patient safety incidents, staff turnover rates and patient satisfaction scores. Demonstrating relationships between transparency and these outcomes builds sustainable support for continued investment. Accountability systems should feature regular review processes where leaders discuss transparency progress and challenges, with representatives from across the organization ensuring diverse perspectives are considered.

## Legal and Ethical Considerations

Healthcare organizations face unique legal and ethical challenges when implementing transparency initiatives:

- ▶ Healthcare HR departments must carefully navigate the complex interplay between transparency and privacy requirements. All transparency initiatives must comply with HIPAA and other healthcare privacy regulations, with clear guidelines for information sharing in different contexts and protocols for data anonymization. Staff need to be trained on these privacy boundaries. Organizations should conduct periodic audits to ensure compliance with evolving regulations.
- ▶ Healthcare-specific regulations create additional compliance considerations. Organizations must adhere to accreditation requirements while maximizing appropriate transparency, protect patient and organizational intellectual property, and maintain confidentiality around protected health information while being transparent about aggregate data. Governance frameworks should clearly document these transparency boundaries, with regular legal audits assessing compliance while supporting transparency commitments.
- ▶ From an ethical perspective, healthcare organizations must establish clear frameworks defining appropriate levels of disclosure for different types of information. They should protect vulnerable individuals while supporting openness and consider potential impacts of transparency on patient trust and care delivery. Ethics committees with diverse representation should regularly review transparency practices, paying particular attention to effects on patient care and provider well-being.

# Future Trends and Predictions

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The future of healthcare transparency will be shaped by technological advances and cultural evolution. Healthcare organizations should prepare for emerging transparency tools including AI-powered solutions that can safely de-identify patient information, real-time performance analytics accessible to clinical teams, blockchain applications for verifying credentials, and advanced visualization tools making complex healthcare data more accessible. Organizations need strategies to evaluate and integrate these technologies while maintaining healthcare-specific security and privacy requirements.

Concurrently, healthcare workplaces will experience significant cultural shifts, including:

- ▶ Increased expectations for openness about quality metrics and outcomes.
- ▶ Growing comfort with vulnerability and error disclosure among professionals.
- ▶ Evolution of privacy norms that maintain patient confidentiality while enabling staff information sharing.
- ▶ New collaboration models that flatten traditional hierarchies.

Patient expectations for greater transparency about healthcare operations will also increase. Organizations should create adaptive frameworks responding to these shifting expectations while maintaining consistency in core practices through regular reassessment of transparency boundaries and ongoing dialogue with staff.

# Ensuring Sustainable Success

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Sustaining transparency initiatives requires a multi-faceted approach. These include:

- ▶ Establishing reinforcement mechanisms connecting transparency to patient safety and quality improvement, with leadership modeling openness even in challenging situations.
- ▶ Recognition programs highlighting transparency champions across clinical and non-clinical roles.
- ▶ Story sharing illustrating positive outcomes.
- ▶ Continuous improvement processes refining approaches based on feedback.

Risk management is equally crucial. Organizations must:

- ▶ Conduct regular audits of transparency practices with attention to patient privacy impact.
- ▶ Establish feedback mechanisms identifying unintended consequences quickly.
- ▶ Develop protocols for course correction when initiatives create challenges.

System integration ensures sustainability by aligning technology systems to support appropriate information sharing and ensuring transparency processes work within existing clinical workflows. Policies should reflect commitment to appropriate openness, with performance management systems connected to transparency expectations and communication systems facilitating multidirectional information flow.

Regular reviews should confirm all components work together effectively while supporting both patient care and staff needs.



# Conclusion

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Healthcare HR leaders should consider specific actions to advance transparency initiatives, beginning with improving transparency around staffing decisions and scheduling processes — areas frequently cited as pain points for healthcare workers.

Creating clear career advancement pathways shows clinical and non-clinical staff how they can progress within the organization, while developing dashboards that share appropriate performance metrics connects individual work to organizational outcomes.

Other steps contributing to a more transparent culture include:

- ▶ Regularly scheduled “town halls” where leadership answers questions directly from staff.
- ▶ Ethics committees focused on balancing transparency with healthcare-specific privacy requirements.
- ▶ Manager training on transparent communication techniques.
- ▶ Mentorship programs that break down silos between departments.

The journey toward implementing transparency in healthcare HR represents a fundamental shift in how medical organizations operate and communicate. Leadership plays a pivotal role, with executives and clinical leaders needing to model openness about challenges, acknowledge mistakes, and create safe spaces for honest dialogue. Technical and operational foundations must be established with healthcare-specific considerations, including appropriate technology infrastructure, comprehensive training programs, and support systems that enable effective information sharing while protecting patient confidentiality.

Ultimately, success depends on a healthcare organization’s ability to create and sustain meaningful change over time through consistent communication, proactive addressing of concerns and willingness to learn from both successes and failures.

Healthcare organizations that successfully navigate this transformation will build trust, drive engagement and create advantage in a challenging talent landscape while delivering higher quality patient care.

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