

# Make your Long-Term Care Facility a Top Employment Destination

**The Keys to Overcoming the Staffing Challenges of Today... and Tomorrow**



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# Building a better workplace isn't just smart — it's a necessary survival strategy for the future

For long-term care, skilled nursing, and assisted or independent living facilities, workforce engagement and retention is critical to **effective, sustainable operations**.

But for many operators and executives, actually getting there is still complicated — and the future is going to bring **even more challenges**.

- **Nurses are in greater demand**, and have higher expectations from their workplaces
- **An aging US population** will bring even more residents into nursing homes
- **Evolving federal staffing mandates** will put even more pressure on facilities to increase their workforce
- **Staffing shortages** are still a major challenge for long term care facilities

## So, what can a skilled nursing facility do now to get ahead of these major challenges?

### Become a destination workplace.

#### What is a “destination workplace?”

- A workplace environment that **attracts and retains** skilled healthcare professionals
- A facility that is **known for its positive work culture**, supportive management, opportunities for professional growth, competitive compensation, and desirable location
- A workplace that **healthcare professionals actively seek out and recommend to colleagues** as their preferred place of employment due to its favorable conditions and reputation within the industry

# Understanding Staffing Challenges in Long-Term Care



Across the country, skilled labor is still very hard to attract and retain. As a result, skilled nursing providers are unable to grow and may even be contracting — even as the demand for these facilities continues to increase:

**55%**

are turning away new residents

**45K**

fewer total beds since 2020

**48%**

of nursing homes have a waiting list

**21%**

are downsizing

**3**

nursing homes opened in the first half of 2023,  
(compared to an average of 64 per year since 2020)

Source: [AHCA Access to Care Report August 2023](#)

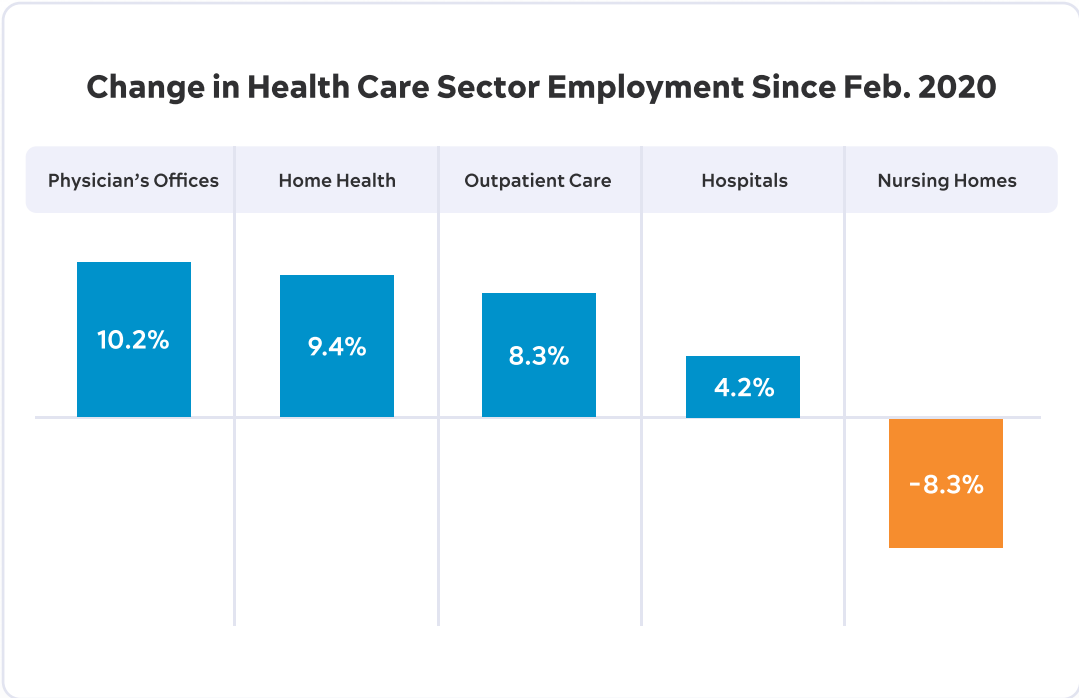


# What’s causing these staffing challenges?

## Staffing shortages and nurse turnover

As long-term care (LTC) facilities stretch their resources to maintain PPD compliance, caregivers are feeling the increased demand put on skilled nursing facility staff — and they’re choosing to simply work elsewhere instead. This adds to the pressure — in effect, creating a self-fulfilling cycle.

The result: while many other sectors have seen increases in employment since 2020, nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities have seen an 8% decrease in labor availability over the same timeframe.

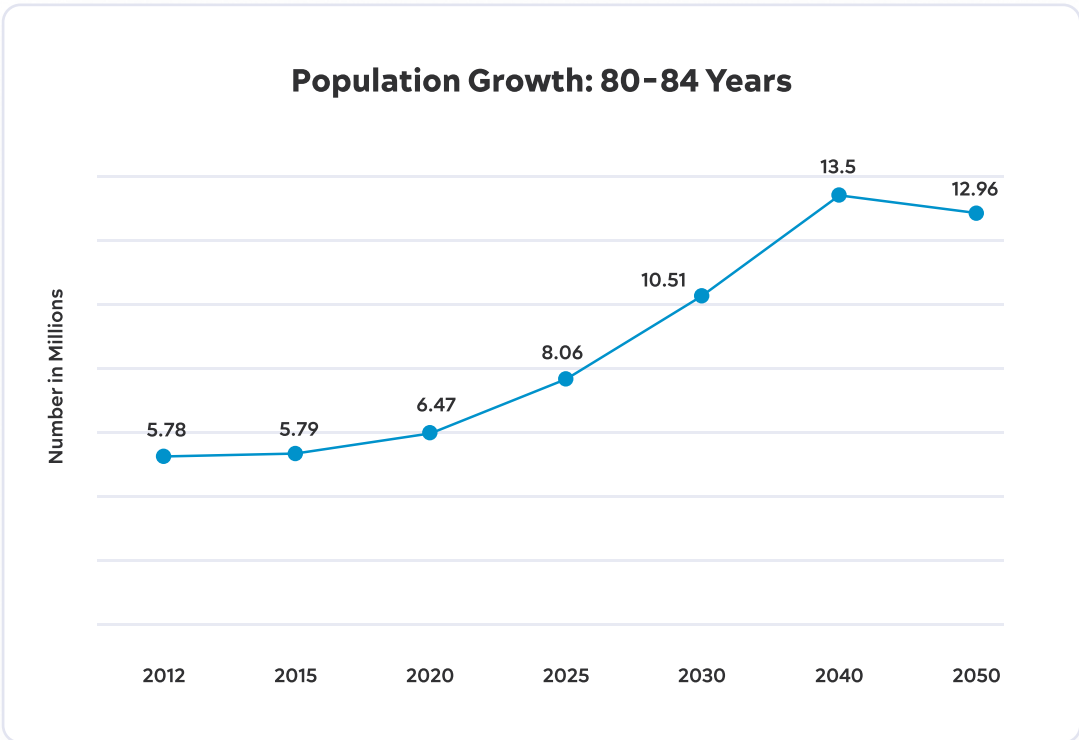


Source: [AHCA Access to Care Report August 2023](#)

## Our elderly population is still growing

Although the U.S. population has been getting grayer and older for decades, we’re still only at the tip of the iceberg.

In fact, current projections show the population of U.S. seniors between the ages of 80-84 will double by 2040 — meaning all the employment stresses that skilled nursing facilities face now will continue to accelerate in the years ahead.



Source: AHCA

# Staffing challenges have a big impact on quality of care

## Effects on Quality of Care

- When there are staffing shortages, **caregivers may be stretched thin**, leading to burnout, rushed care, neglect, or errors in medication administration.
- Inadequate staffing can result in **delays in responding to emergencies** or changes in residents' conditions, potentially leading to adverse outcomes.
- Residents may **not receive the attention they need for activities of daily living**, such as bathing, grooming, and assistance with mobility, leading to a decline in their physical and mental health.



# Staffing challenges also impact potential revenue



## Effects on Potential Revenue

- Staffing shortages can result in **higher costs for agency coverage**, overtime pay, recruitment, and training of new employees.
- Failure to **meet CMS regulations and staffing requirements** can result in a decreased CMS 5-star ranking, citations, fines, or loss of accreditation — further impacting the facility's reputation and ability to attract residents.
- Poor quality of care due to staffing challenges can lead to **decreased occupancy rates**, as prospective residents and their families seek out facilities with better reputations for care quality.

# To Overcome Staffing Challenges, You Need to Create an Exceptional Work Environment

Creating a more positive work environment in a skilled nursing facility or long-term care facility involves implementing strategies that focus on employee recognition, upskilling opportunities, diversity and inclusion programs, and reducing nurse burnout through work/life balance initiatives.

**Here are four key steps toward a more empowered workforce:**



## #1

### **Recognize employee achievements**

Establish a formal recognition program to acknowledge and reward employees for their hard work and encourage peer-to-peer recognition where employees nominate and recognize their colleagues for outstanding contributions.

## #2

### **Provide upskilling opportunities**

Offer training programs, workshops, and continuing education opportunities to enhance employees' skills, and support employees in obtaining certifications, licenses, or advanced degrees that can further their career progression.

## #3

### **Support diversity & inclusion**

Implement diversity and inclusion training programs to educate staff members about the value of diversity, and promote a culture of respect, empathy, and understanding.

## #4

### **Protect work-life balance**

Support flexible scheduling options and tools to accommodate employees' personal needs and preferences, and encourage the use of paid time off (PTO) and vacation days to promote work/life balance and prevent burnout.



# Attracting & Recruiting Quality Talent

Attracting and recruiting quality labor talent in a skilled nursing facility or long-term care facility requires strategic approaches tailored to the unique needs and values of the organization. Here are strategies focusing on advertising jobs effectively, interviewing candidates aligned with LTC values, and implementing proper onboarding programs.

## Advertise jobs in all the right places

It's important that you seek out talent where the best talent actually is! Make sure you're keeping up with the latest job seeker platforms and try a variety of hiring tactics to ensure you're drawing from the best possible labor pool.

## Interview candidates that align to your values

During your initial conversations and pre-interview processes, be sure to ask questions that dive into a candidate's values and motivations. That way, you can be sure you're aligned before they join the team.



## Develop the right onboarding programs

Your new employees' first days on the job can be a big determining factor in their long-term happiness. Make sure they feel welcomed and grounded as they begin their work in your facility.

## Simplify your talent search with [applicant tracking software \(ATS\)](#)

By centralizing candidate data, facilitating efficient resume screening and applicant communication, an ATS helps to boost overall quality of hires and saves time finding quality candidates.



# Want to Increase Employee Retention? It's Time to Think About Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment and retention are crucial aspects of maintaining a skilled and dedicated workforce in a skilled nursing facility or long-term care facility.

Here are strategies focused on promoting employees' sense of purpose in their workplace, some of which might be your most powerful allies on the path to becoming a destination workplace.

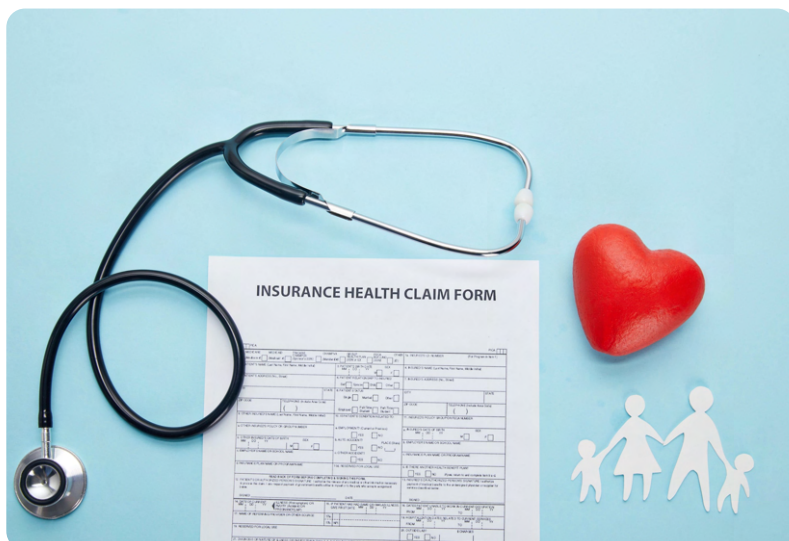
## Support ongoing training programs, including specialized training

Provide opportunities for staff members to participate in **specialized training sessions** tailored to different roles within the facility, such as wound care management, dementia care techniques, palliative care, or behavioral management strategies. This training makes day-to-day work **more achievable for staff**, and it also gives individual employees a clearer path toward overall career growth.



## Provide competitive employee benefits and compensation

Comprehensive healthcare benefits like medical, dental, and vision insurance, 401(k) or pension plans, and options for flexible spending accounts (FSAs) or health savings accounts (HSAs) can offer **major benefits for healthcare professionals**. It could be the factor that keeps your teams happy and satisfied to stay with your facility for the long haul.



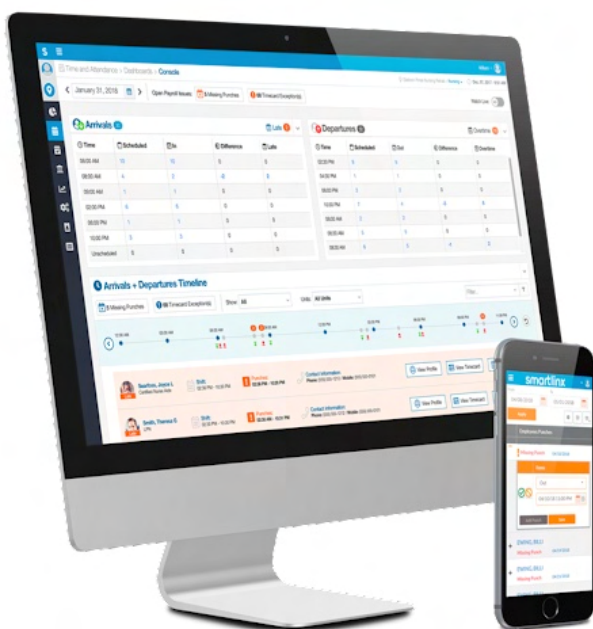
## Improve your workplace communication

Open and transparent communication between management and staff members is crucial.

You can support this communication through regular meetings, newsletters, and electronic communication platforms, and by implementing structured communication protocols for sharing important information, updates, and policies.

A centralized **Message Center** helps keep all staff in sync by providing intuitive, centralized messaging that empowers employees to resolve staffing issues quickly and facilitates real-time employee communication on one unified platform. This allows managers to view all employee texts in one place and quickly identify new and unread messages.

Don't forget to encourage feedback from employees on ways to improve communication processes! Their feedback is critical to ongoing success of these programs, and good communication can't be a one-way street.



## Leverage tools and technology that help reduce the burden of manual work

By investing in technology solutions and automation tools to streamline manual tasks, you can help staff reduce paperwork and improve efficiency in daily operations.

Don't forget to provide training and support to staff members on how to use technology tools effectively! Keeping everyone informed is key to helping teams integrate this technology into their workflows.



# Leveraging Technology is Crucial for Workplace Improvement

By leveraging technology for workforce management and HR operations, skilled nursing facilities and LTC facilities can streamline processes, improve efficiency, and enhance compliance, ultimately leading to better employee satisfaction and resident care outcomes.

## Healthcare workforce and staffing software can help centralize operations for increased efficiency

Human Capital Management [solutions like Smartlinx](#) empower LTC facilities to centralize and automate various aspects of employee management, including scheduling, recruitment, time and attendance, payroll, and compliance.

These software solutions often offer centralized databases where employee information, credentials, certifications, and training records can be stored securely and accessed as needed.

By centralizing operations, LTC facilities can reduce administrative burdens, minimize errors, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, and improve overall workforce management efficiency.





## Technology can help you engage employees and reduce labor costs

**Employee Engagement:** The right technology can help foster transparent communication, improve work-life balance, and enhance training opportunities for employees. By providing employees centralized access to schedules, pay information, and training resources, technology platforms like the [Smartlinx Go mobile app](#) can promote trust and open dialogue between management and staff, leading to greater job satisfaction and engagement.



**Labor Cost Reduction:** Through optimized staffing levels and efficient payroll processing, technology can help LTC facilities reduce labor costs while maintaining quality care standards. By [automating scheduling](#) to minimize agency usage, avoid overstaffing, minimize overtime, and by streamlining time and attendance and payroll processing to prevent errors and save time, you can help your team allocate resources more effectively and strategically.

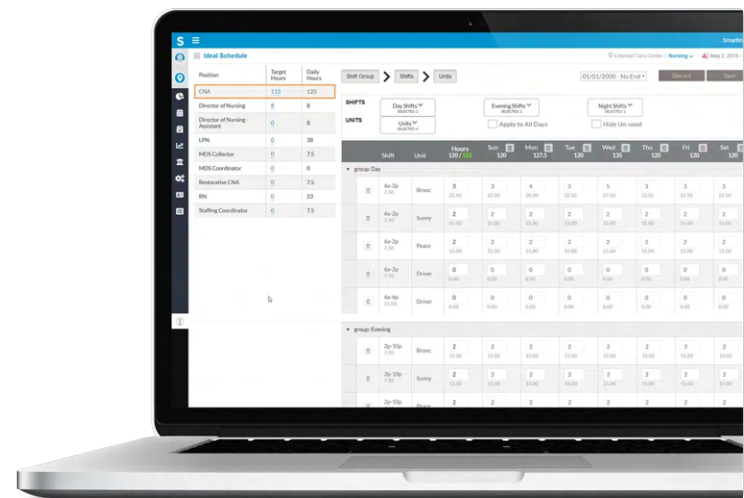
## Use technology to streamline operations and boost your facility's compliance

**Workforce Compliance:** Technology platforms help to simplify compliance management by tracking certifications, licenses, staffing data, and training requirements, ensuring timely renewals, accurate reporting and [payroll-based journaling \(PBJ\)](#), and adherence to regulatory standards. Additionally, scheduling features help maintain proper staffing ratios, mitigate compliance risks, and ensure quality of care for residents.

**Streamlined Operations:** With the help of technology, LTC facilities benefit from efficient recruitment processes and centralized data management. By automating recruiting from candidate sourcing to onboarding, facilities reduce time-to-fill positions and streamline operations. Additionally, a centralized platform for managing employee data, schedules, payroll, time and attendance, and compliance records eliminates the need for disparate systems, reducing administrative overhead, and enhancing operational efficiency.

## How to find the right workforce management and HR systems for your LTC facility

- **Find Solutions Designed for Long-Term Care:** The staffing challenges for long-term and post-acute care providers are unique, and your ideal solution should be built from the ground-up to solve these challenges.
- **Identify key priorities and challenges:** Determine the specific workforce management and HR needs of your LTC facility, such as improving scheduling efficiency, ensuring compliance with staffing regulations, or reducing administrative overhead.
- **Conduct a thorough needs assessment:** Evaluate your current processes, systems, and pain points to identify areas where technology solutions could provide the most significant benefits.
- **Research available solutions:** Research different workforce management and HR software vendors to compare features, functionality, pricing, and user reviews. Look for solutions that offer scalability, customization options, and integration capabilities with existing systems.



## Tips for smooth implementation of your facility's workforce management and HR system

**Request demos and trials:** Schedule demos or request trial versions of software solutions to test functionality, usability, and compatibility with your facility's workflows. Involve key stakeholders, such as HR staff, nursing managers, and IT professionals in the evaluation process.

**Consider implementation and support:** Evaluate the vendor's implementation process, training resources, and ongoing support services to ensure a smooth transition and effective utilization of the software solution.

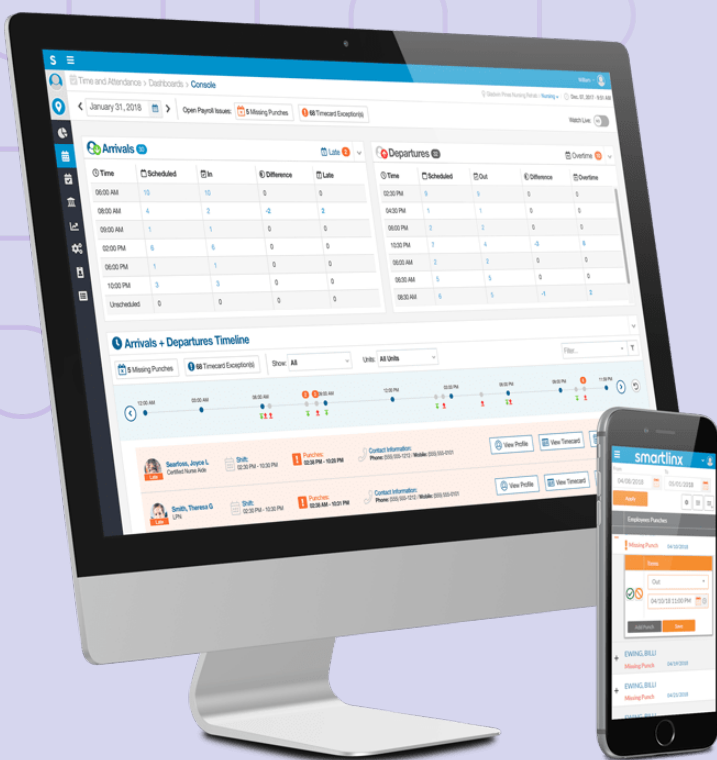
**Understand the potential ROI of your new solution:** By implementing a workforce management suite of solutions to your business, you should forecast your future savings in labor costs, administration, etc. Work with a vendor who can provide this analysis and demonstrate the positive impact the solution will have on your bottom line.

# It's Time to Transform Your Long-term Care Facility into a True Destination Workplace

By elevating your long-term care facility into a **destination workplace** — one where employees aspire to work, thrive, and deliver exceptional care to residents — you can put your facility in the best possible position to overcome the enormous labor challenges facing the industry.

By implementing key strategies and tools such as employee recognition programs, ongoing training initiatives, competitive benefits packages, and streamlined workforce management software solutions like Smartlinx, you can create an environment where staff feel valued, engaged, and empowered to succeed.

By investing in your workforce, you're investing in the future success and sustainability of your long-term care facility. Your employees will be more engaged, easier to retain, and a source of referrals for new talent. Take the first step towards transformation today and make your facility the employer of choice in the industry.



## Ready to get started?

[Request a demo](#) today to learn how Smartlinx can help you cultivate a positive workplace built to withstand the industry's biggest future challenges.

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