

# Work as a Team to Navigate Staffing Shortages

## You're not alone if your pharmacy is facing staffing shortages.

It's a nationwide crisis...and may last for years.

Employers and pharmacy organizations are discussing strategies for recruitment and retention. But system changes won't happen overnight.

In the meantime, focus on what you and your team can do to navigate challenges...minimize burnout...and keep patients safe.

Brainstorm how to leverage available staff, learners, etc.

For example, non-pharmacy employees may be able to answer phones or work the register during crunch times...and pharmacists may allow trained pharmacy students to give immunizations.

Encourage patients to use your pharmacy app or website to order refills or check Rx status...to cut down on phone calls. And set expectations about wait times up front...to limit frustration later.

Look for new ways to optimize workflow. For instance, designate work spaces for "waiter" Rxs to help prioritize orders...or try daily checklists to divide up tasks and ensure everything gets done.

Never compromise safety. Rushing or using work-arounds could lead to errors or problems that will cost more time in the long run.

Discourage staff drama, unhealthy conflict, or other activity that creates a toxic culture. It's a big reason for turnover.

Instead, try to maintain a positive attitude...and remind yourself and your colleagues of all the good your team is doing.

Keep in mind that picking up extra hours can boost camaraderie and your paycheck...but overdoing it can take a toll.

Consider ways to strike a balance. For example, if needed, pick up hours on NONconsecutive days...or split an extra shift.

Continue to make your mental health a priority. For instance, take scheduled breaks outside of the pharmacy, if possible. Get our resource, *Prevention and Management of Burnout*, for more strategies.

Think outside the box with recruiting. There may be community members, neighbors, or even patients who may make great techs.

Look into our Pharmacy Technicians University to get new hires up and running.

## Key References:

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- <https://avalere.com/insights/how-healthcare-staffing-shortages-are-changing-the-labor-market> (5-24-22)
- <https://hiring.monster.com/resources/workforce-management/employee-retention-strategies/how-to-manage-a-staffing-shortage/> (5-24-22)

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