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2014 Health Care Hiring: Meeting Consumer Expectations



By: Joanne Cleaver

What's in store for health care hiring in 2014? Health care recruiters and hiring managers are about to be challenged with finding a new vein of talent that pivots around the healthcare consumer experience.

One big driver of the trend is the [Affordable Care Act](#) (ACA, otherwise known as Obamacare.) which is opening new roles in health care hiring.

"Health care is changing so fast they don't even know how it's changing," says Jim Kauffman, product manager for executive solutions and a health care practice expert for consulting firm DDI.

Read on to learn more about the new health care roles that will emerge in 2014 and what they mean for health care recruiting.

Retail Skills Transfer to Healthcare

A year ago, Mike Zipser was a regional executive with Dick's Sporting Goods, making sure that its Chicago-area stores stocked enough balls, bats, mitts and bikes to keep sports enthusiasts playing.

He's still in the business of keeping customers active and on their feet -- but now Zipser is a [health care manager](#).

As a regional manager with [Concentra](#), a division of Humana that runs more than 300 urgent care centers and employer-based wellness centers around the country, Zipser has made a high-level lateral move into health care.

At first glance, his career move seems like a leap. But walk-in health care has more in common with [retail skills](#) than one might think, says Zipser, such as the need for staff to immediately engage with customers and the need for a culture that can convert a low moment in a customer's day into a high point of [customer service](#).

Alan Ayers, vice president of strategy for Concentra, says that the required skills for a multi-site clinical manager is more aligned with experience gained in the retail, hospitality and even restaurant industries, then applied to health care.

"We represent a creative viewpoint about the medical experience," says Zipser.

The ability to manage and lead change is becoming a primary skill for health care managers. Employers are not just looking for middle managers who can replicate prior success, but for employees who can prove that they are adaptable and flexible.

An Urgent Need for APRNs

Within health care systems, a new breed of nurse is keeping track of all these changes: Clinical Nurse Leaders.

CNL's fall under the umbrella of [Advanced Practice Registered Nurses](#) (APRN), a category that also includes certified nurse-midwives and nurse practitioners. To date, only 3,000 clinical nurse leaders have been certified, reports Joan Stanley, Senior Director of Education Policy for the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing](#).

Yet health care providers can't hire them fast enough, says Stanley, because clinical nurse leaders bridge daily nursing practice with system-wide initiatives such as quality improvement, patient safety, and transitions to home and self-care -- all priorities of the ACA.

"They are the pivot point for outcomes," says Stanley. The position's salary range is \$60,000 to \$90,000.

A Demand for Healthcare Data Analysts

Inevitably, in 2014 clinical nurse leaders will coordinate with health care information managers as patient information privacy and security comes into sharp focus, says Lou Ann Wiedemann, senior director for health information management practice excellence for the [American Health Information Management Association](#) (AHIMA).

"When paper records existed, you'd never lose 500,000 records at once," says Wiedemann. "But now that everything is in a database, each of those 500,000 records is at risk."

This still emerging [health care data analyst](#) position will integrate records privacy and security -- in other words, the policy of privacy and the technical accomplishment of security.

In 2014, health care data analysts will control the flow of information, not just internally, but also to doctors' practices and pharmacies. And, thanks to the ACA, they will also impact healthcare navigators and others who are attempting to coach consumers through the process of accessing ACA benefits.

The latest crop of analyst candidates in AHIMA's certification classes included bankers, lawyers, statisticians, and nurses.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the overall amount of recordkeeping demanded by the ACA is responsible for a projected 21% growth in medical records and health information technical jobs.

Just as in their consumer health care experience, consumers will fully expect that health care practitioners will be up to speed on accessing, protecting, and coordinating their data, says Wiedemann.

And the demand for health care data isn't just from younger consumers. A 2013 survey conducted by consulting giant Accenture found that over 75% of Medicare clients -- those would be senior citizens, by definition -- are online at least daily to use email, social media and to search for information.

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About 67% of these Medicare clients reported that they'd like online access to their health care records, too – an expectation unfathomable even five years ago.

Meeting Health Care Expectations in 2014

If there is one lesson from the problematic rollout Healthcare.gov, it's that consumers (and President Obama) expect health care technology and their health care experience to mirror their everyday consumer experiences, both online and on-site.

Therein lies one of the biggest health care trends likely to accelerate in 2014: reorienting health care services from what institutions want to do to what *consumers want* to experience.

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