

Provider Recruitment and Retention: Building a Lasting Future

At Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), we believe the strength of our care begins with the people who deliver it. Our providers practice in a safety net environment because they are deeply mission-driven, committed to keeping care local while serving diverse communities with complex needs.

That same commitment guides how we invest in our providers, from recruitment through long-term career growth, allowing us to support the needs of our care team in addition to the community we serve every day.

Recruiting for Fit

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, where we saw record turnover rates and position vacancies, our team reviewed colleague engagement scores and interviews to identify opportunities to elevate the recruitment experience, leading to:

- A dedicated recruitment team
- Internal residency hiring benefits
- Compensation transparency
- Accelerated credentialing and payer enrollment
- Structured provider orientation with regular check-ins
- Peer mentorship program for new providers
- A 90-day onboarding schedule with at-the-elbow navigators beginning at contract sign

We also prioritize a provider-led clinical placement process, where we take time to introduce our providers to the support and nursing staff across our sites to ensure both a technical and cultural fit.

Ensuring Long-Term Success

At a time when [nearly half of U.S. physicians are experiencing burnout](#), leading to increased turnover, CHA has increased our commitment to maintaining a healthy environment for our providers across the length of their career with CHA, not just the first day or month. We are committed to maintaining this environment through our:

- **Elevating the provider voice:** We value our providers by actively listening and responding to their main concerns. By involving providers in focus groups and committees, we make sure their viewpoints influence key decisions. At CHA, we transform our providers' feedback into meaningful actions, continually adjusting to better support care teams in serving the community.

- **Transparent compensation program:** Our providers know when and how their compensation will increase, and our compensation schedule is equitable and synchronized across the organization.
- **Internal referral bonuses:** We ensure that our providers are rewarded for their contributions to recruitment and their ability to help build strong care teams at CHA. Our internal referral program places value on this dedication from our providers to position CHA as a competitive health system with many benefits to offer new providers.
- **Reducing administrative burden:** To combat burnout and alleviate administrative burden for our providers, we are thoughtfully and strategically implementing proven AI tools so that our providers can reduce administrative time and focus on what matters most: caring for our patients.

Translating Change into Results

We've seen these improvements and our sustained commitment to providers meaningfully shift the needle on engagement.

While this is a continuous effort, we've already raised our internal engagement scores, and our provider turnover rate is below the national average amid increased patient volume and provider productivity.

CHA will continue to build upon our mission-oriented culture by investing in the providers who help keep our care local and are committed to the patients in our community. As these investments prove, our commitment today is shaping into a roadmap for excellent, equitable care for years to come.

Mark Haas, Chief Administrative Officer, Cambridge Health Alliance Physicians Organization