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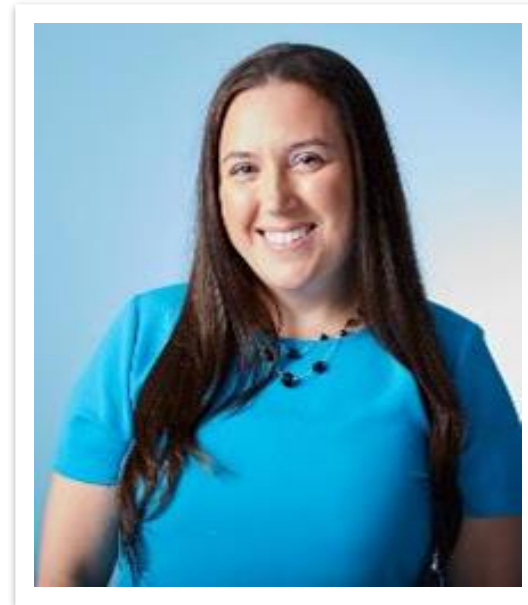
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Creating a Culture of Career Pathways for Professional Caregivers

Today's Panelists



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Course Objectives

- Understand key workforce trends impacting caregiver recruitment and retention.
- Identify evidence-based strategies to support career advancement and professional growth.
- Reinforce how the use data to align training, recognition, and engagement initiatives with workforce stability goals.
- Identify practical strategies that boost morale and retention through structured recognition and development programs.



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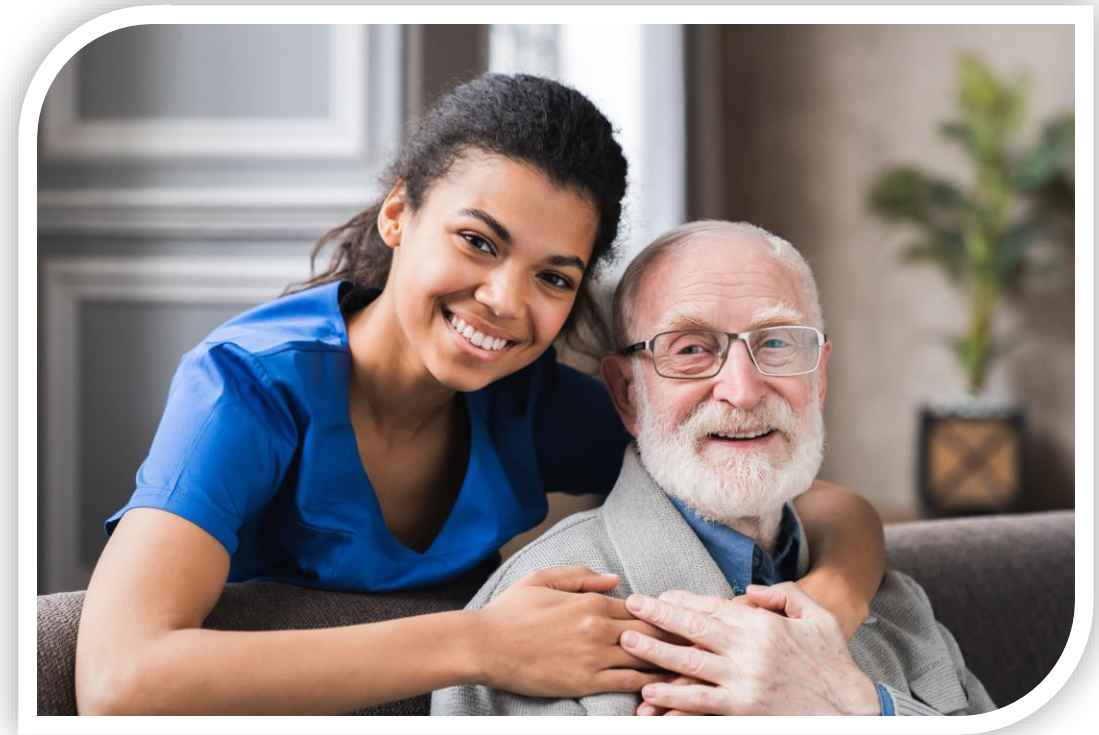
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Current State

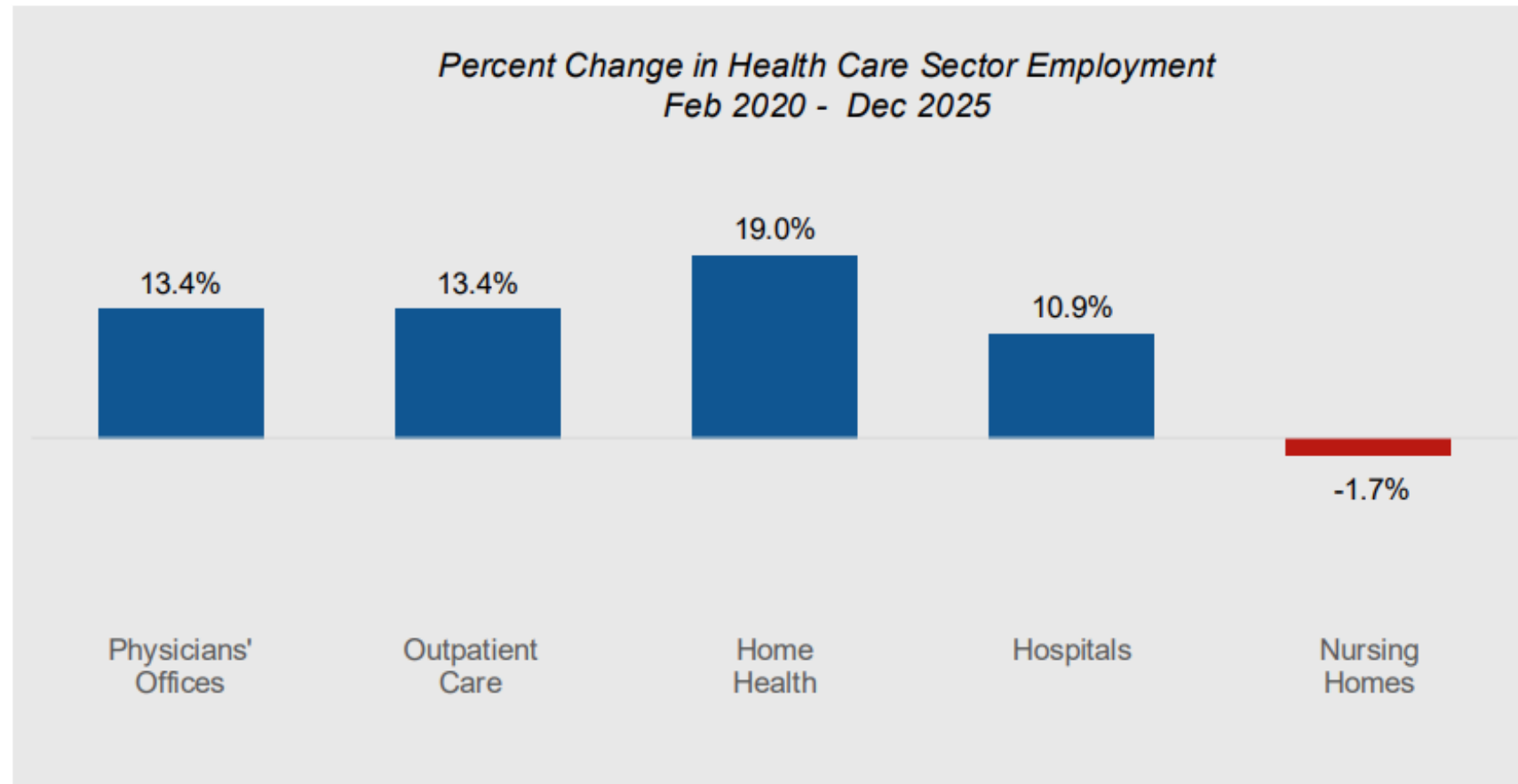
Change and Need

Demographics

- 1/1/2026 – First Baby Boomer to turn 80, approximately 10K per day turn 80
- 2026 – 15% of the senior population will be over 80
- 2033 – 30% of the senior population will be over 80
- 2045 – population of over 80 estimated to double – 15m to 30m



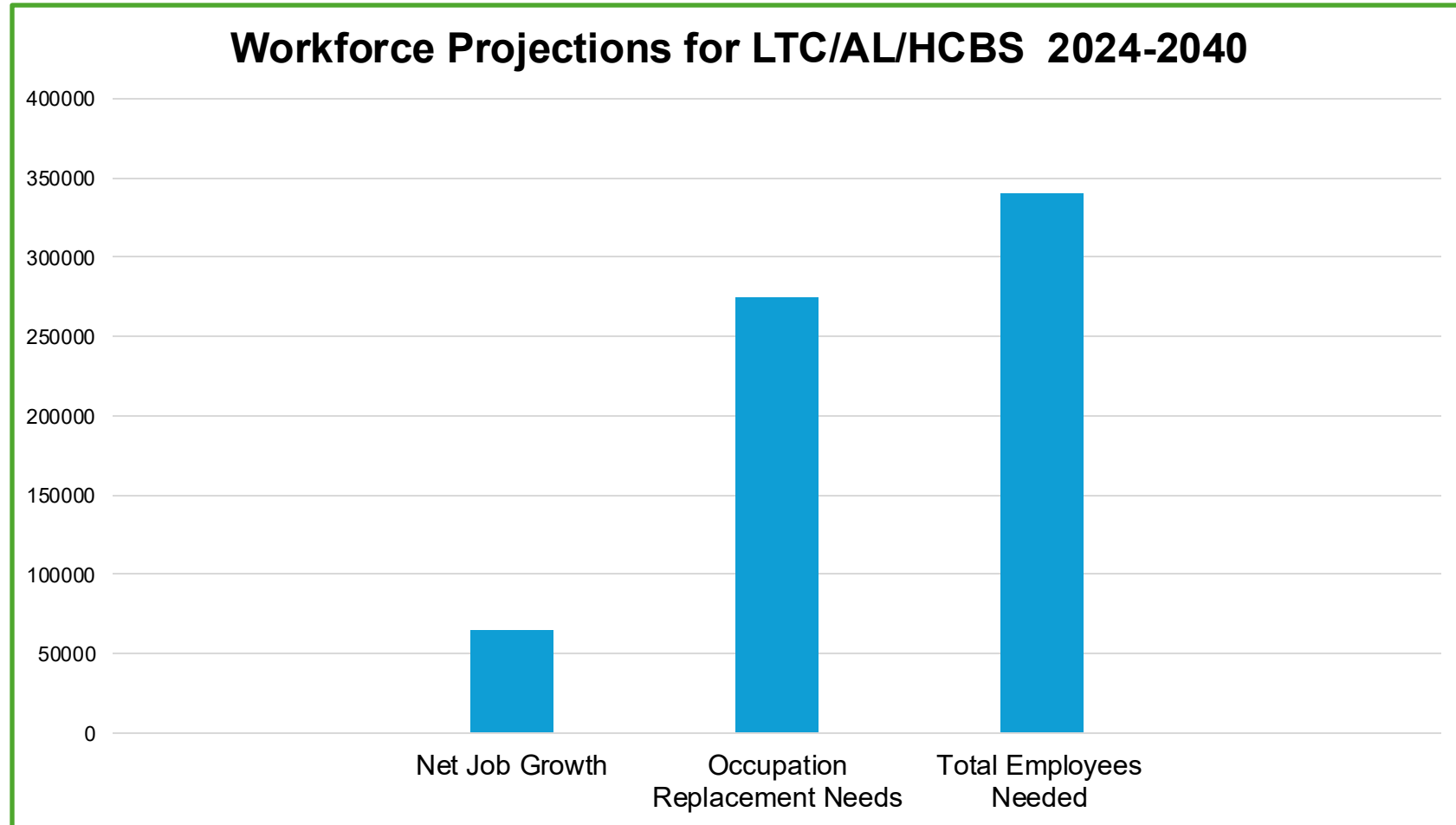
On the Verge of Recovery



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Feb 2020 – Dec 2025

Source – AHCA
Workforce Report 2026

Workforce Needs



Source: Projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Strategies

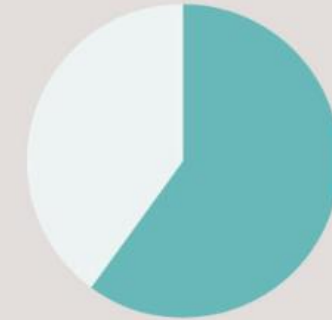
Source – Provider Magazine - AHCA Workforce Report 2026

Strategies Providers Are Using

Percent of providers that have applied various workforce strategies:



92%
increased compensation



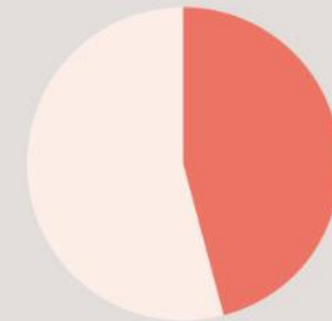
60%
provided new/
additional training



55%
expanded career
pathway or promotional
opportunities



39%
prioritized employee
well-being programs



46%
updated
benefits packages



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Driving Instability

Understanding

Turnover Patterns

- 40-70% turnover – still the norm
- Highest risk – 0-90 days of employment
- Variables
 - Supervisor
 - Unit/Area
 - Workflow/workstream
 - Culture



Root Cause - Top Drivers of Turnover

- Lack of visible career growth & advancement pathways
- Inconsistent or ineffective onboarding experience
- Limited feedback, recognition, and feeling undervalued
- Frontline leadership capability gaps (communication, support, coaching)
- Training-to-role mismatch (not aligned with real job demands)





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Leadership Roadmap

From Root Cause to Workforce Stability

Recognition

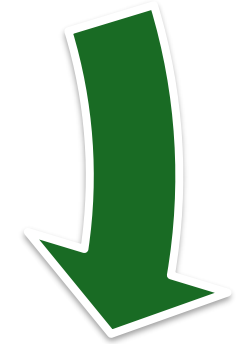


Career Pathways

Workforce Stability System



Data

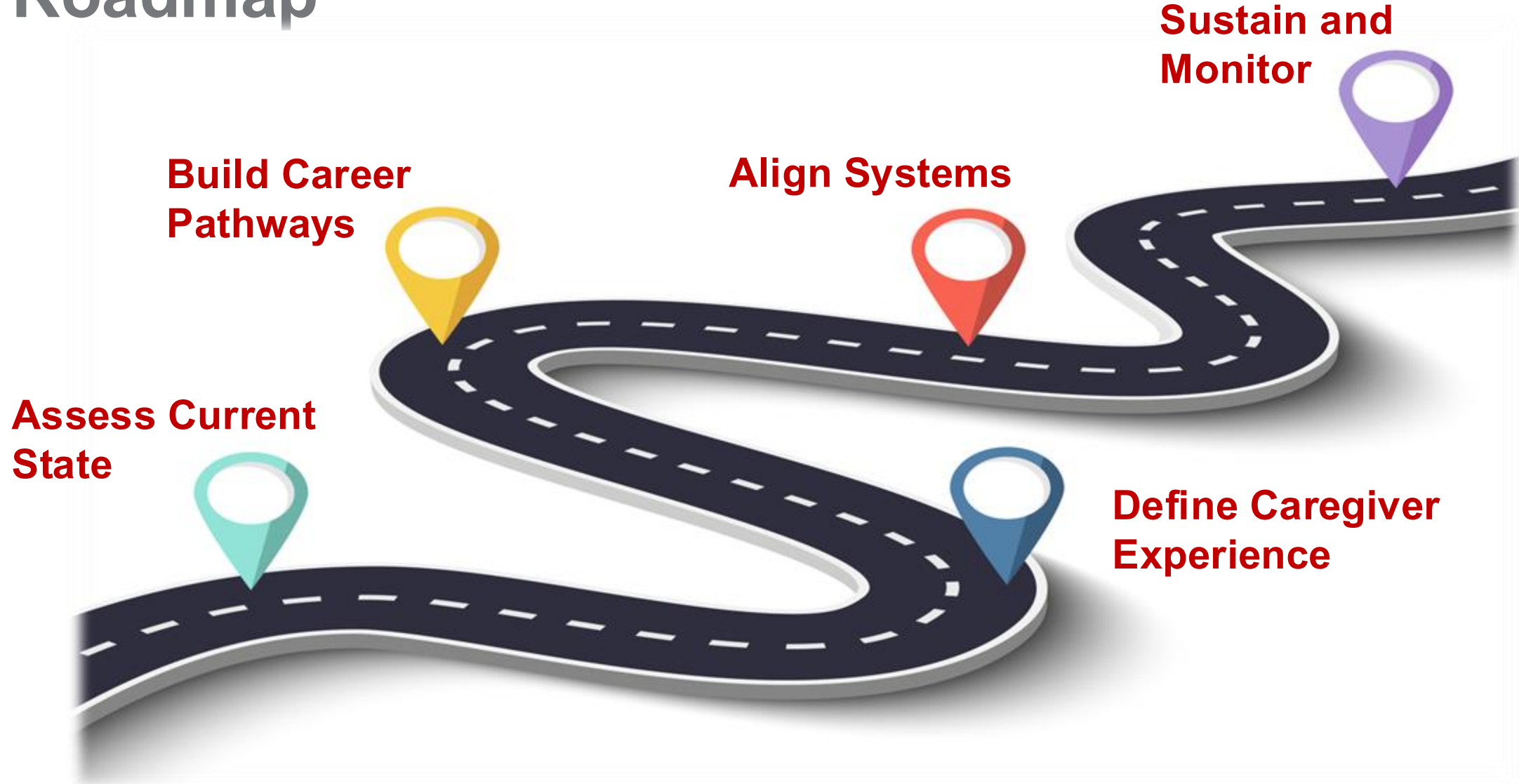


Engagement

Training



Roadmap



1. Assess Current State

- Turnover (overall + by role/unit)
- 30/60/90-day retention
- Exit interview themes
- Engagement scores
- Agency usage & vacancy rates



Leadership Tactics

- Build a monthly workforce dashboard
- Segment data by unit, role, and tenure
- Conduct stay interviews quarterly
- Review data in leadership meetings



2. Define the Caregiver Experience

- Hiring → onboarding → first 90 days
- Consistency of onboarding
- Clarity of expectations
- Access to support



Leadership Tactics

- Standardize onboarding process
- Assign trained preceptors
- Implement 30/60/90-day check-ins
- Use onboarding checklists
- Review the Onboarding experience – Fresh set of eyes



Onboarding experience – Fresh Set of Eyes

- What does it actually feel like to be a new caregiver entering your organization?
- Application to orientation
- Ask them:
 - “What surprised you about your first week?”
 - “What was confusing?”
 - “When did you feel most supported?”
 - “When did you feel least supported?”



Resource

Onboarding Experience Assessment Checklist

This tool, while not all inclusive, is designed to help leadership determine if there are opportunities for improvement related to the onboarding experience.

1. Application & Hiring Process

- Application process is easy and mobile-friendly
- Timely communication after application submission
- Clear job expectations provided upfront
- Interview process is respectful and organized
- Offer communication is timely and clear

2. Pre-Boarding (Before Day One)

- New hire receives welcome communication
- Clear instructions for first day (location, time, dress code)
- Schedule provided in advance
- Paperwork completed before the first day when possible
- Point of contact identified for questions

3. Orientation Experience

- Orientation agenda is structured and followed
- New hires are welcomed and introduced to the team
- Content is relevant to role (not just compliance-heavy)
- Opportunity for questions and interaction
- Technology and access set up correctly

4. First Week Experience

- Assigned a trained preceptor/mentor
- Clear expectations for daily responsibilities
- Consistent schedule provided
- Regular check-ins by supervisor
- New hire feels supported and not overwhelmed

5. First 30-90 Days

- 30/60/90-day check-ins conducted
- Feedback collected from new hires
- Skills competency validated
- Recognition provided for milestones
- Career pathway or growth opportunities discussed



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Onboarding Experience Assessment Checklist

6. Overall Experience

- Onboarding is consistent across departments
- Training aligns with real job demands
- Communication is clear and timely
- New hires feel valued and engaged
- Process is continuously improved based on feedback

Caregiver Experience

First Day Experience

- Was the first day organized and structured? (Yes/No)
- Did the employee know where to go and what to expect? (Yes/No)
- Were introductions made to team members? (Yes/No)
- What worked well?
- What could be improved?

First Week Experience

- Was a preceptor consistently assigned? (Yes/No)
- Were expectations clearly explained? (Yes/No)
- Did the employee feel supported? (Yes/No)
- What challenges did the employee experience?
- What support would have helped?

First 30 Days

- Was a 30-day check-in completed? (Yes/No)
- Are core competencies developing appropriately? (Yes/No)
- Is the employee engaged and participating?
- What feedback has the employee provided?
- What barriers exist?

60-Day Progress

- Was a 60-day check-in completed? (Yes/No)
- Is the employee gaining confidence in role? (Yes/No)
- Are performance expectations being met? (Yes/No)
- What additional training is needed?
- What retention risks are present?

90-Day Milestone

- Was a 90-day review completed? (Yes/No)
- Is the employee fully onboard and independent? (Yes/No)
- Has the employee expressed intent to stay? (Yes/No)
- What recognition has been provided?
- What growth opportunities have been discussed?



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3. Build Visible Career Pathways

- Career Pathways:
 - Create direction
 - Increase engagement
 - Improve retention
 - Build internal pipeline
- Defined role progression
- Skills & competency requirements
- Training alignment
- Pay progression tied to growth



Leadership Tactics

- Conduct career conversations quarterly
- Identify high-potential caregivers early
- Provide stretch assignments
- Offer cross-training opportunities
- Build preceptor/mentor roles
- Post internal opportunities first
- Create skill-based promotion criteria
- Track internal promotion rates
- Provide training pipelines



Leadership Tactics

Define role-based career progression

- CNA → CNA II → Med Aide → LPN → RN
- Non-clinical tracks: Preceptor, Scheduler, Lead, Quality roles

Map competencies and advancement criteria

- Skills validation
- Behavioral expectations
- Tenure and performance standards

Align training to each level

- Role-specific education
- Cross-training opportunities
- Certification pathways

Integrate mentors and preceptors

- Assign experienced staff to support development
- Create formal preceptor roles with expectations

Connect progression to compensation and recognition

- Pay increases tied to advancement
- Recognition of milestones and certifications

Communicate pathways clearly and consistently

- Visual career ladders
- Ongoing career conversations with leaders

4. Align Training, Recognition & Engagement

- Training based on:
 - Performance gaps
 - Turnover data
 - Clinical quality outcomes
 - Staff feedback
- Recognition tied to behaviors/outcomes
- Engagement driven by feedback



Leadership Tactics

- Link training to quality metrics
- Recognize retention milestones (30/60/90 days)
- Reward skill progression
- Highlight high performers tied to outcomes
- Implement leadership rounding/calls
- Act on engagement feedback
- Alignment is not about doing more—it's about making what you do work together



Leadership Tactics

- Engagement
 - Stay interviews
 - Feedback loops
 - Leadership rounding
 - Engagement surveys
- Remember
 - Care
 - Connect
 - Coach
 - Contribute
 - Congratulate



5. Measure, Adjust & Sustain

- Ongoing metric tracking
- Leadership accountability
- Continuous improvement
- Measure → Review → Adjust → Improve → (repeat)



Leadership Tactics

- Monthly workforce reviews
- Leader scorecards
- Tie outcomes to performance goals
- Continuous feedback loops





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Boosting Morale and Retention

Through Structured Recognition and Development Programs

Foster a Culture of Professional Caregiver Excellence

Structured Development That Builds Engagement and Retention

- **Embed person-centered care principles** into onboarding and ongoing education to reinforce caregiver purpose, confidence, and connection to outcomes.
- **Align training** to ensure caregivers understand both the “what” and the “why,” strengthening meaning in their work and improving job satisfaction.
- **Use real-world care scenarios** to build competence and confidence, reducing stress and increasing caregiver effectiveness in daily practice.
- Support growth through **interdisciplinary case reviews, coaching, and timely feedback**, creating clear pathways for professional development.
- **Incorporate frontline caregiver input** into training design to ensure relevance, elevate caregiver voice, and strengthen engagement.



Aligned Training That Supports Professional Growth and Retention

Aligned Training that Supports Professional Growth and Retention

- **Develop interdisciplinary, partner-aligned education** that reinforces shared accountability and elevates caregivers as key contributors to care outcomes.
- Reinforce the **value and impact of the professional caregiver role** through coordinated training that highlights their influence on safety, continuity, and recovery.
- **Utilize technology-enabled learning platforms** to provide accessible, consistent, and ongoing professional development opportunities.
- Co-develop clear **care protocols and escalation pathways**, reducing uncertainty and burnout while improving confidence in decision-making.
- Promote a **team-based, person-centered approach** that reduces fragmentation and fosters a stronger sense of belonging and professional respect.



Implement Meaningful Recognition Programs

Celebrating Caregivers to Improve Morale and Reduce Turnover

- Establish **formal recognition programs** (e.g., Caregiver of the Year, peer recognition, milestone awards) that celebrate excellence and reinforce organizational values.
- Recognize **caregiving excellence and compassionate care**, highlighting the full impact caregivers have on clients and families.
- Create **ongoing, visible recognition opportunities** (e.g., monthly spotlights, client testimonials, team shout-outs) to sustain morale and engagement.
- Tie recognition to **career pathways and advancement opportunities**, reinforcing long-term growth within the organization.
- **Leverage recognition** to strengthen culture, increase job satisfaction, and reduce turnover by ensuring caregivers feel valued, seen, and supported.



Training in Action – Professional Caregiver Engagement

Caregiver Experience in Practice:

- Caregiver role and day-to-day responsibilities
- Real-world caregiver scenario or challenge
- Impact on caregiver confidence, decision-making, and job satisfaction
- Support tools and resources utilized (training, coaching, technology)

Engaging and Developing Professional Caregivers:

- How is training delivered to actively engage and support caregivers?
- How are skills reinforced, validated, and sustained over time?
- How does ongoing development strengthen confidence, competence, and career growth?





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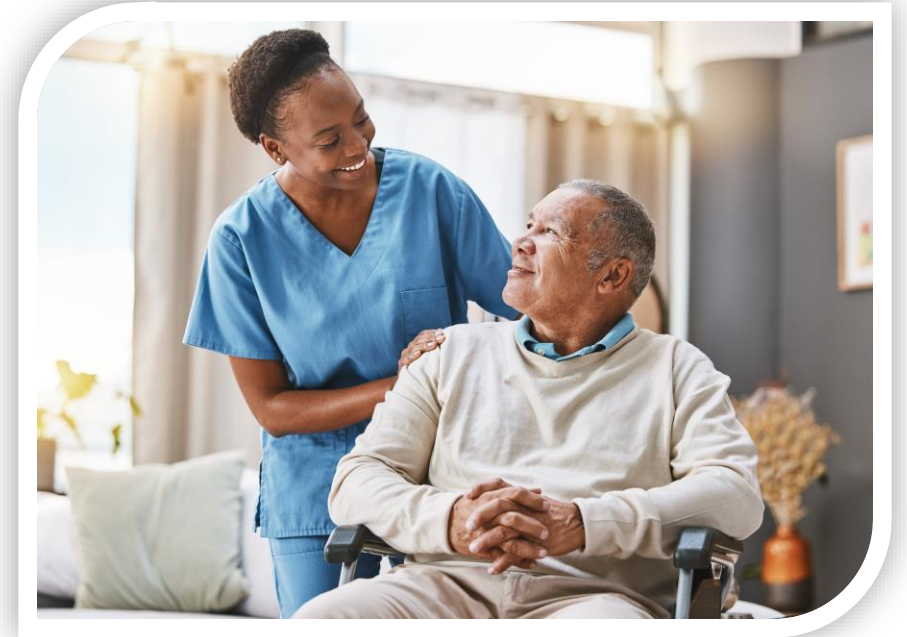
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Bringing It All Together

Key Takeaways for Leaders

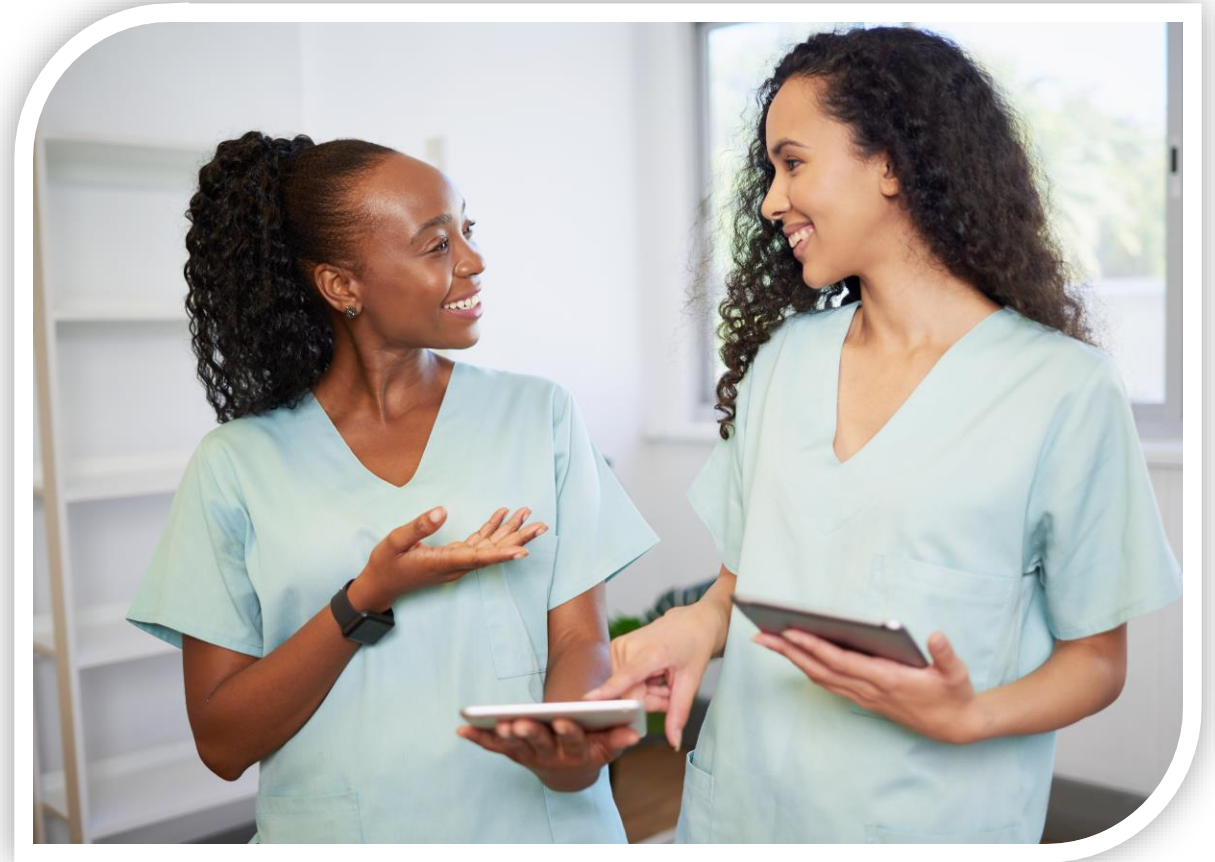
Workforce stability is built—not managed

- **Understand the root causes**
Turnover is a system outcome
- **Make the future visible**
Career pathways drive engagement
- **Lead with data and intention**
Align training, recognition, and engagement
- **Create consistent experiences**
Onboarding, development, and leadership matter
- **Reinforce through recognition**
What gets recognized gets repeated



Final Thoughts

When leaders make growth visible, they turn jobs into careers—and organizations into places people choose to stay.





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