



Understanding Healthcare Retention in Southeast Michigan

2025 Focus Group and Survey Findings

Healthcare turnover in Southeast Michigan, for many occupations, is elevated compared to the statewide average and many other states. Turnover is financially costly and has the potential to compromise the quality of patient care. To uncover more about healthcare turnover in Southeast Michigan from the employee perspective, MHC contracted with DRWP to conduct two studies:

➞ Focus Group Assessment

The goal of the focus group study was to personally engage with health system employees in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties in healthcare support occupations (clinical and non-clinical) earning less than the 2024 Michigan median hourly wage (\$23.22/hr) to understand the challenges they face at four health systems with locations in Southeast Michigan – Corewell Health, Henry Ford Health System, McLaren Health Care, and Trinity Health.

➞ Turnover Survey

The survey aimed to understand factors that contributed to employees’ recent separation from health systems in Southeast Michigan. Data was collected on these individuals’ current careers to learn the industries and roles they are working in now and identify why workers left (either voluntarily or involuntarily) to inform future retention strategies.

About Us

MHC Insight is powered by Michigan Health Council, a 501(c)(3) on a mission to ensure the future of the healthcare workforce.

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Key Findings from Focus Groups

Common Cross-System Themes:

- Chronic understaffing across clinical and non-clinical roles
- Ineffective human resources (HR) processes and delayed or absent follow-up
- Lack of transparent and supported career advancement pathways
- Communication breakdowns between staff and leadership
- Peer support as a primary source of morale and retention
- Organizational leadership perceived as out of touch with frontline realities
- Fear of retaliation or futility if/when reporting issues

Key Findings from Retention and Turnover Survey

- 86.5% of survey respondents voluntarily left their previous employer (meaning they either resigned, quit, or retired). The most highly ranked reasons for leaving were advancement opportunities, commute, and company culture/personal fit.
- 13.5% left involuntarily (meaning they were let go or their position was eliminated). The three most common reasons were budget cuts or funding loss, organizational restructuring or downsizing, and contract ending or not being renewed.
- 77.3% of respondents stayed in healthcare, but 22.7% of respondents have left the industry altogether. Of those who left, 20.0% now work in Information Technology, 13.1% work in Manufacturing, 12.6% work in Business, 12.6% work in Hospitality, 12.0% work in Education, 8.6% work in Food/Culinary Services, 8.0% work in Retail, 6.9% work in Agriculture, and the remainder work in another industry.

Learn more and request a copy at mhc.org/insight

Recommendations

01 Invest in Structured Career Pathways

Include paid training and credentialing supports, such as apprenticeship programs, recognition of acquired outside credentials for non-clinical positions, and financial assistance to pursue career advancement.

02 Clearly Communicate Opportunities for Advancement

Create clear, supported advancement routes for all staff. Routes already in place should be presented to employees and career advancement should be discussed regularly.

03 Redesign Onboarding

Establish mentorship programs and ensure new hires are adequately prepared for their roles before being left to work independently. Formal onboarding and training processes should be in place.

04 Create Safe Feedback Mechanisms

Clearly identify designated HR representative(s) for employees and provide clear, accessible ways for employees to contact them.

05 Enhance Supervisory Training

Equip managers and team leads with training on inclusive communication, conflict resolution, and worker engagement.

06 Strengthen Internal Communication Channels

Improve transparency from leadership, particularly about schedule changes, performance expectations, and organizational changes. Employee concerns and requests should be acknowledged and resolution processes explicit.

07 Recognize Peer Support Networks

Create team-building and peer recognition programs that sustain the informal support systems workers already value.