

What will drive the future of health care jobs?

As COVID-19 has shown, the economy and society are changing rapidly. In the first months of the pandemic, technology use leapfrogged 5 years. COVID-19 has caused an economic shock 3 times worse than the 2008 global crisis. Economic and social disruption will continue. Education and health care will change constantly.

How will we respond to these changes? This document summarizes World Economic Forum findings with insights to help inform Workforce Planning and Development plans to prepare Kaiser Permanente for the future.

The 3 key factors shaping future health care jobs are:



TECHNOLOGY



ECONOMICS



CLIMATE CHANGE



TECHNOLOGY

Digital expertise is the top skill the workforce needs to enhance. It's the ability to apply past experiences with technology to new technologies, and to use different tools with each other. By 2025, it's likely machines will do half of all work tasks. Digital expertise can help us adapt to these changes.

Top new digital tools impacting health care jobs:

1. Internet-connected devices
2. Big data analytics (managing population health)
3. Artificial intelligence (eliminating redundant tasks)
4. Text, image and voice processing (expediting staff and patient communication)
5. Encryption and online security
6. Cloud computing (information retention and security)
7. E-commerce and digital trade (enabling seamless transactions)
8. Blockchain (processing claims and managing supply chains)
9. Augmented and virtual reality (care delivery including VR exposure therapy and training)
10. 3D and 4D printing and modeling (used to make personal protective equipment)

11. Precision medicine (using genetics and environmental details to design treatments)
12. Drones (service delivery)

Top emerging skills in health care:

1. Ability and desire to learn
2. Emotional intelligence
3. Creativity, originality and initiative
4. Leadership and social influence
5. Resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility

Top barriers to using technology in health care:

1. Lack of flexibility in regulatory framework
2. Skill gaps in local labor market
3. Inability of organizations to attract specialized talent

Action steps

To adapt to these changes, keep building skills and be a lifelong learner. It's easier now, as technology has increased access to education. Kaiser Permanente resources include tuition reimbursement and education trusts, which had record 2020 usage with increased online participation.

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ECONOMICS

COVID-19 has shocked the economy. Four in 10 U.S. adults say they or someone in their household has been laid off, lost their job or taken a pay cut. More jobs were destroyed in the first 2 months of the pandemic than in the 2-year Great Recession. This affects health care, since most coverage is tied to employment. Economic loss has disproportionately impacted communities of color, including their access to health care.

What's next

Competition will continue from nontraditional health care providers such as retail and tech firms. Global competition will drive employers and government agencies to demand greater value from the U.S. health care system.

All the anticipated change indicates that getting new skills in technology will enhance job security.

Action steps

Expand the reach of upskilling, or teaching current employees new skills. Employers expect to offer upskilling to 70% of their employees, but predict that only 42% of those eligible actually will take these training opportunities. Kaiser Permanente and the Labor Management Partnership unions have negotiated robust resources such as education trusts to assist union members in adapting to these changes and preparing tomorrow's workforce. Learn more at kpcareerplanning.org.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change challenges us to maintain the health and resilience of communities facing increasingly adverse conditions. Nearly 1 in 4 deaths is a result of living or working in an unhealthy environment. The greatest environmental threat is from air pollution.

Climate change also has resulted in human emergencies like wildfires, floods and severe storms, which put repeated short-term stresses on the health care delivery system.



TAKE ACTION

Consider how we can prepare for the future.

What factors can you influence to help employees get future ready?

How can technology increase access to training?

How can current trends propel on-the-job education?

Want planning help? Contact your regional Workforce of the Future implementation specialist:

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