Andgo

Staffing in the Dark: Healthcare's Critical Absence Problem

(AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT!)

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"Physicians are some of the most resilient people out there. When this group of people starts leaving en masse, something is very wrong."

SHEETAL RAO
Primary-Care Physician

"There is no health without nurses."

ERNEST GRANT
President of the American Nurses Association

"Our nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system and if too many leave or decide not to pursue a career in nursing, the consequences would be catastrophic"

SAFIYA GEORGE
Dean & Professor at Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing

Introduction

It has been well documented that healthcare organizations are in crisis mode when it comes to their workforce. There is simply not enough staff to go around. This immediately begs a few questions:

1) What can be done about it?
2) How can healthcare organizations do more with less?

![Andgo]

The process of employee absence reporting (i.e. calling in sick) and how the organization receives and actions those absence communications is the critical first touchpoint.

It is also often an overlooked component; traditional absence management methods are plagued by inefficiencies, manual tasks, and fragmented processes, creating significant challenges for organizations.

With little to no visibility into absences across the organization, there is no opportunity to learn or improve; "you can't manage what you can't measure" as the old adage says. You can't even begin to effectively solve the problem of filling more critical vacant shifts without knowing where they exist.

> This white paper will explore how when applied strategically and holistically, an optimized absence management process can provide significant quick wins for healthcare organizations.

![Andgo]

Background:
The Growing Crisis of
Absence Management

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on organizations worldwide, particularly in the healthcare sector. Among them, healthcare systems faced unprecedented challenges and strains on their staff. The magnitude of the pandemic's impact created a perfect storm, pushing scheduling staff to critical levels of anxiety and anguish. The urgency to fill necessary shifts became overwhelming, as there simply weren't enough available personnel and time to meet patient demand. However, this dire situation did not begin and end with the pandemic. Rather, the pandemic shone a light on the critical need for solutions to alleviate the burden on healthcare organizations, their staff, and the delivery of patient care.
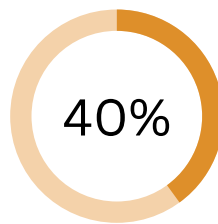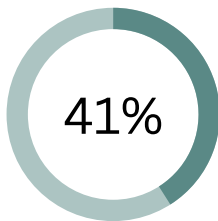
Burnouts Rates on the Rise

According to studies published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, burnout rates among doctors rose from under 32% in 2019 to 40% in 2022, while nurses experienced a similar increase from around 41% to over 49% during the same period.[1]
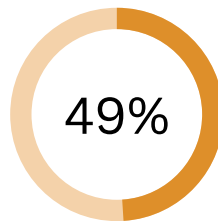
32%
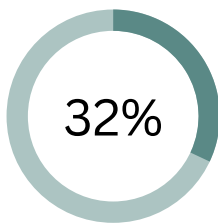
2019 Doctor
Burnout Rate

40%

2022 Doctor
Burnout Rate

41%

2019 Nurse
Burnout Rate

49%

2022 Nurse
Burnout Rate

Furthermore, the pandemic prompted healthcare professionals to reconsider their careers. A recent study shows that 31% of healthcare workers are planning to leave the profession by 2024, with pandemic-related stress as the main driver behind the voluntary attrition.[2] These trends in burnout and workforce dissatisfaction have far-reaching consequences for the healthcare industry. Projections indicate a significant shortage of healthcare professionals in the coming years.

If current workforce trends persist, more than 6.5 million healthcare professionals may permanently leave their positions by 2026, while only 1.9 million are expected to step in to replace them. This projected shortage of over 4 million healthcare workers underscores the urgency of implementing effective solutions to address staffing challenges.[3]

> In the face of this crisis, healthcare organizations require a transformative absence management solution.

What got us here will not get us there.

The Opportunity of Intelligent Automation

Intelligent automation has emerged as a game-changing solution in absence management. By leveraging this technology, organizations can streamline absence management processes, harness actionable data insights, and gain increased visibility into staffing allocation and resource management.
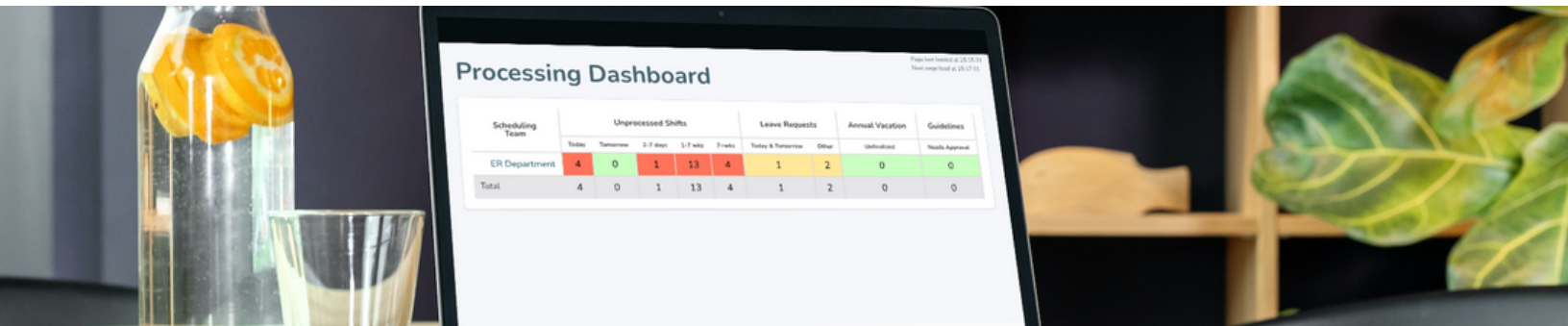
Workforce Management Integration

A fundamental aspect of intelligent automation solutions is seamless integration. Rather than introducing another disconnected tool, intelligent automation seamlessly integrates with the existing scheduling system, alleviating time-consuming implementation. This integration ensures data accuracy, automatically updates scheduling data in real-time, and provides a holistic view of employee information.

Streamlining Absence Management

Traditional absence management processes involve manual tasks and fragmented communication, leading to limited visibility and inefficiencies. Intelligent automation simplifies the entire process, enabling real-time visibility and automatic schedule updates, significantly reducing the time required to manage absences and fill vacant shifts. By eliminating manual tasks, reducing paperwork, and streamlining processes, organizations can free up valuable time and resources to focus on mission-critical work.

Actionable Data Insights

Intelligent automation goes beyond the reactionary, delivering real-time tracking by leveraging historical data and staffing patterns to provide predictive data insights. By analyzing these patterns, healthcare organizations can anticipate and plan for future absences, enabling better optimization of staffing resources and eliminating ambiguity around which shifts to fill first. This data-driven approach empowers decision-makers to make strategic workforce planning decisions and reduce their dependence on external resources, leading to cost savings and enhanced operational efficiency.

Visibility into Real-Time Movement of Staff

Automation ensures visibility and transparency throughout the entire absence management process. By automatically capturing and updating absence information, schedulers have real-time visibility into absences and a comprehensive audit trail that captures every step in the process. This level of transparency enables schedulers to promptly address high-priority absences, make informed staffing decisions, and maintain a clear and reliable record of events. This agile and responsive approach prevents disruptions in patient care and allows for efficient resource allocation in an ever-changing environment.

Intelligent Absence Automation:
Real-World High Impact Outcomes

One of the leading academic healthcare systems in the United States faced significant challenges that came to a head during the COVID-19 pandemic. With some 2,600 beds, more than 6,500 affiliated physicians and 20,000 employees, this health system sees more than 2 million visits annually.

The resulting strain on staffing resources was unprecedented, leading to heightened anxiety among scheduling staff struggling to keep up with as many as 3,000 sick calls a day at the height of the pandemic. Manual and siloed processes for handling employee absences further exacerbated the problem, leading to inefficiencies and errors. The organization referred to this challenge as "death by a thousand cuts". Recognizing a need to streamline and automate their absence workflow, they began looking for a solution to these challenges.

2,600
beds

6,500
affiliated physicians

20,000
employees

2 MILLION+
visits annually

Implementing an automated absence workflow system (Andgo) resulted in significant and rapid improvements in the operational efficiencies related to absence workflows for the healthcare system.

Out of the **81,000+ callouts** processed in a 12 month span, an astounding **96.15% of them were automatically processed,** virtually eliminating the need for manual scheduler intervention.

In **less than 1 minute per absence**, the system efficiently handled the entire process, freeing up valuable time and resources for staff to refocus on higher-value tasks (such as patient care and filling the critical staffing vacancies created by these absences).

81,000+
requests processed

Less than 1 min
average absence processing time

96.15%
absence requests auto-processed

261%
ROI automating absences with Andgo

Chief among the impressive benefits of implementing Andgo was the astonishing Return on Investment (ROI). From a cost standpoint, the healthcare system achieved an astounding 261% ROI by automating their absence management with Andgo.

These outcomes highlight the transformative power of Intelligent Automation. Ultimately, the healthcare system was able to effectively manage a significant volume of absence calls with virtually no manual effort or processing required. As a result, the overall productivity and satisfaction of both employees and managers has improved dramatically.

"Managers no longer do manual tasks when employees call out sick. In fact, even our supervisors & managers are using Andgo for call outs and I love that it's saving me time."

ANDGO CUSTOMER
Support Services Director

Summary & Next Steps

In an ever-changing workforce landscape, organizations across industries continue to face unprecedented staffing challenges, leading to significant strains on staff and posing significant risk to operations. The magnitude of these problems calls for an effective absence management solution that can streamline processes and optimize staffing resources. Andgo emerges as the leading solution in this landscape, offering unparalleled capabilities to address absence management challenges.

By leveraging Andgo, organizations can navigate the challenges posed by manual and siloed absence management processes. This holistically automated approach not only optimizes operational efficiencies but also empowers managers and supervisors to eliminate manual tasks and save valuable time. By embracing automation and leveraging the capabilities of Andgo, organizations can ensure seamless absence management, enhance staff satisfaction, and divert more focus to delivering exceptional patient care.

> [Connect with the team at Andgo](#) for a quick chat about your staffing/scheduling environment. We'd love to see if we can help!
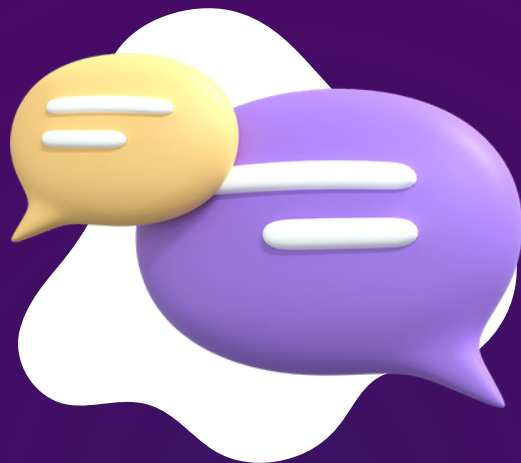

Resources

Embrace the future of absence management with Andgo and unlock a new level of efficiency, productivity, and employee satisfaction. Check out these additional resources to learn more!

- What's in it for You?
- Product Suite overview
- Customer Metrics
- Book a Demo

Endnotes

1. "A Public Health Crisis: Staffing Shortages in Health Care," USC Keck School of Medicine, last modified March 13, 2023, https://mphdegree.usc.edu/blog/staffing-shortages-in-health-care/

2. "31% of healthcare workers plan to leave role by 2024: Study," Becker's Physician Leadership, last modified April 18, 2023, https://www.beckersphysicianleadership.com/physician-workforce/31-of-healthcare-workers-plan-to-leave-role-by-2024-study.html

3. "The Shortage of US Healthcare Workers in 2023," Oracle, last modified January 2023, https://www.oracle.com/ca-en/human-capital-management/healthcare-workforce-shortage/#:~:text=One%20study%20projects%20that%20if,more%20than%204%20million%20workers

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