

# The Hidden Cost of Administrative Strain: A Growing Threat to Healthcare Performance



**Healthcare’s administrative workforce serves as the invisible backbone of care delivery, supporting everything from patient access and scheduling to billing, compliance, and coordination.** Yet the demands on these teams have grown significantly more complex. As administrative responsibilities continue to expand, teams are operating under increasing pressure from tight financial constraints and staffing shortages. When administrative staff is strained or unsupported, the impact is felt across the system — through delays, inefficiencies, and lost revenue. Thoughtfully designed work environments can play a meaningful role in improving how effectively healthcare organizations operate day to day.



# Strengthening Organizational Performance Through Workplace Design

Operational efficiency is a defining priority for healthcare organizations, even as staffing shortages and turnover strain administrative performance. As expectations shift, gaps between how work happens and how spaces support it are becoming more pronounced. Rethinking these environments, through spaces that support focus, collaboration, and well-being, can better align daily operations with performance goals.



## Under Pressure to Perform

Health systems are under increasing pressure to do more with existing resources, making performance gains essential to maintaining stability and growth.



**of healthcare executives cite improving operational efficiency as their top priority**

Deloitte, 2025 Global Health Care Outlook, January 2025.

## Workplace Expectations Impact Retention

Work environments that fail to support staff expectations are contributing to ongoing workforce instability across critical administrative roles.



**of younger administrative staff in registration, billing, scheduling, IT, and HR are leaving because workplaces don't meet their expectations for flexibility, well-being, and collaboration.**

Becker Hospital Review, Healthcare employee turnover by role, April 2025

# What's At Stake

## For patients

- **Experiences become fragmented**

Administrative bottlenecks can slow scheduling, registration, and coordination, delaying access and disrupting continuity of care.

- **Trust is diminished**

Inefficiencies and visible disorganization can erode trust in the system's ability to deliver timely, reliable care.

## For administrative staff

- **Burnout and turnover escalate**

Inefficient environments that offer no real spaces for focus, collaboration, or recovery increase fatigue and impact engagement.

- **Errors increase**

Environments that hinder concentration and organization can contribute to mistakes in detail-sensitive, high-volume work.

## For organizations

- **Performance is constrained**

Inefficient administrative operations limit throughput, slow processes, and reduce overall system effectiveness.

- **Revenue is impacted**

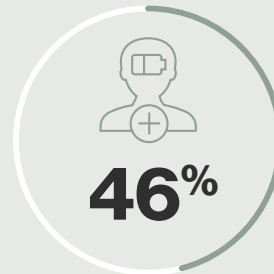
Delays, errors, and staffing gaps in administrative functions can disrupt billing, collections, and financial stability.

### Administrative Strain Disrupts Patient Experience



of healthcare providers are experiencing revenue cycle staffing shortages, contributing to delays, errors, and disruptions that impact the patient experience<sup>1</sup>

### Workload Pressures Are Driving Administrative Burnout



of non-clinical healthcare staff report experiencing burnout<sup>2</sup>

### Administrative Functions Account For Majority Of Operating Costs



of total hospital operating expenditures is tied to administrative functions<sup>3</sup>



## Design Thinking:

Administrative performance depends on environments that support both sustained concentration and continuous learning. Dedicated focus spaces and flexible training areas help reduce cognitive strain, improve accuracy, and equip teams to adapt to evolving operational demands.

## Environments that support focused work and ongoing development

- **Focus pods for concentrated work**

Semi-enclosed breakout spaces limit distractions and sensory overload, supporting sustained concentration for detail-oriented tasks, private calls, or heads-down work.



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- **Flexible training environments**

Training spaces furnished with mobile tables and seating easily adapt to diverse learning styles and evolving needs. Reconfigurable layouts encourage participation and interaction, helping administrative staff stay engaged and retain critical information.



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## Design Thinking:

Stronger collaboration leads to better coordination and more efficient outcomes, yet many organizations rely only on formal meeting rooms for interaction. Huddle areas and shared workspaces enable more immediate communication without disrupting daily operations.

### Environments designed to foster impromptu connection

- **Embedded meeting hubs**

Integrated, informal meeting areas support real-time problem solving, quick check-ins, and knowledge sharing throughout the day while keeping teams connected to the surrounding work environment.

- **Multipurpose shared staff zones**

Flexible shared work areas create opportunities for quick coordination and information sharing throughout the day, helping administrative teams stay connected and responsive as demands shift.



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## Design Thinking:

Demanding workloads with limited opportunities to step away can contribute to fatigue, reduced concentration, and declining performance over time. Providing dedicated spaces to recharge and reset helps alleviate daily strain, supports well-being, and enables staff to remain engaged and effective throughout the workday.

### Restorative environments that support well-being and sustained performance

- **Dedicated break areas**

Respite spaces prioritize well-being by providing a dedicated retreat for administrative staff to step away, reset, and return with renewed focus.

- **Private reflection rooms**

Quiet, enclosed spaces provide administrative staff with a place to briefly decompress and relax away from daily demands, helping reduce stress and burnout.



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