

# Current research agenda for C-suite leaders

Topic	What we're researching	Why it matters
<b>State of the industry heading into 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the pivotal shifts happening in healthcare right now and how are industry stakeholders responding?</li><li>• How are changes in safety net access, spend management, and care decision making affecting the future of care delivery, financing, and innovation?</li><li>• What do executives need to know about healthcare that could affect their strategy for the next 5-10 years?</li></ul>	<p>Long-standing assumptions about healthcare access, spend management, and clinical decision-making are unraveling under pressure from funding cuts, rising costs, and changing consumer trust and expectations.</p> <p>Healthcare leaders must understand the players exerting new power and the spillover effects within their regional ecosystems, to navigate a future where control is no longer centralized, but shared (for better or for worse).</p>
<b>Financial outlook for hospitals into 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which hospitals are seeing their financial picture improve and which ones are struggling?</li><li>• Which hospitals are prepared for 2026?</li></ul>	Faced with growing financial pressures on the traditional hospital business model, C-Suite leaders need to orient their financial performance to the larger market to see how they stack up and where they have opportunities to inflect financial performance.
<b>10 trends impacting health systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the major highlights, messages, and data points about and impacting health systems?</li></ul>	C-Suite leaders need to understand the trends impacting their systems so that they can adapt and respond.
<b>Strategic planners survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the intentions of health system strategy leaders related to spending, growth, operations and partnership?</li></ul>	C-Suite leaders need to understand where the market is going and what their peers are prioritizing related to spending, growth, operations and partnership.
<b>Care variation reduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can health systems design, implement, and track adherence to care standards across all facilities to reduce costs, improve quality, and ensure a consistent patient experience regardless of where the patient presents?</li></ul>	There is a \$100B cost savings opportunity in addressing unwarranted CVR. C-Suite leaders need to understand the opportunity in their systems to prioritize CVR efforts and get buy-in from other leaders and broader teams.
<b>Value-based care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How to create the foundation for better VBC contracting</li><li>• What is the role of specialists in VBC?</li></ul>	As VBC adoption increases, two key factors that will determine success are payer contracting and specialist engagement. C-Suite leaders need to understand these factors so that they can shape their systems' VBC strategies.
<b>AI in healthcare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AI use in strategy and service lines</li><li>• AI for clinical and coverage decision-making</li><li>• AI in revenue cycle and payment integrity operations</li></ul>	AI utilization varies widely across organizations, and even across individuals within an organization. C-Suite leaders need to understand the opportunities and best practices for AI in different functions across their systems.

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<b>Geographic market archetypes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How do different healthcare markets compare based on demographic, population, and healthcare supply factors?</li></ul>	C-Suite leaders need to understand forecasts in their markets to plan for growth.
<b>Service line market trends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What key changes in each of the major service lines -- oncology, cardiovascular, neurosciences, orthopedics, women's health, and infusion -- are the most impactful to care delivery and service line strategy?</li></ul>	C-Suite leaders need to understand specialty care market dynamics to anticipate disruption, identify opportunities, and grow their services more effectively.
<b>Service line growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How do health systems compete to capture and retain patients and partners?</li><li>How can health systems improve the capacity of their workforce, infrastructure, and access points?</li><li>How can health systems drive and align the vision, mission, leadership, and culture of their service lines?</li></ul>	Health systems rely on service lines to drive growth, but they're finding that growth feels increasingly unattainable when relying on traditional strategies. C-Suite leaders need examples of service line growth strategies that solve common problems, work around common barriers, or involve innovative approaches to growth.
<b>Site-of-care shifts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What are the latest trends in site-of-care shifts?</li><li>Where are site-of-care shifts having the biggest impact?</li><li>How is care shifting for key procedures and outpatient services?</li></ul>	C-Suite leaders need up-to-date data and information to understand the impact of care shifts in their markets.
<b>2026 workforce benchmarks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What are the latest benchmarks for workforce span of control and turnover?</li><li>How can organizations use comparative data to inform staffing analysis and workforce planning?</li></ul>	Benchmarking enables C-Suite leaders to assess organizational performance, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions about staffing structures and retention efforts.
<b>State of the nursing workforce</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What disconnects exist between what nurses need and what their roles and work environments provide?</li><li>What are the most urgent gaps in physical and psychological safety, staffing, workload, flexibility, and career development?</li><li>What actionable strategies can health systems use to address these gaps?</li></ul>	Nurses are the largest component of the healthcare workforce – and one of the largest line items on the health system budget. C-Suite leaders need to understand the root causes of dissatisfaction and burnout in the nursing workforce to improve retention, workplace culture, and long-term sustainability of nursing teams.

The questions you can answer with our data and analytics tools

Tool*	Strategy questions you can answer
<u><a href="#">Market Scenario Planner*</a></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What will volumes look like in five years?</li><li>• What services have the most growth potential in my market?</li><li>• How does growth compare across my service areas?</li></ul>
<u><a href="#">Demographic Profiler*</a></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are population demographics in my market changing?</li><li>• Where should I target service investments to reach high-priority demographics?</li></ul>
<u><a href="#">Cancer Incidence Estimator</a></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the current and forecasted volumes of cancer cases in my market?</li></ul>
<u><a href="#">Clinician Supply Profiler*</a></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which clinical specialties are undersupplied in my market?</li></ul>
<u><a href="#">Hospital Benchmark Generator</a></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does your organization stack up on finance, quality, and utilization performance metrics?</li></ul>
<u><a href="#">Care Variation Reduction Assessment</a></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where are there excess costs at your hospital compared to risk-adjusted benchmarks across all providers, your system, or a specific cohort of facilities?</li></ul>

*\*tools updated at least annually*