

Current research agenda for consulting and accounting firms

Topic	What we're researching	Why it matters
Specialty care market trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What key changes in each of the major service lines (oncology, cardiovascular, neurosciences, orthopedics, obesity care, and women's) are the most impactful to care delivery and service line strategy?	Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand specialty care market dynamics to anticipate disruption, identify opportunities, and support their provider customers more effectively.
Service line growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do health systems compete to capture and retain patients and partners?• How can health systems improve the capacity of their workforce, infrastructure, and access points?• How can health systems drive and align the vision, mission, leadership, and culture of their service lines?	Health systems rely on service lines to drive growth, but they're finding that growth feels increasingly unattainable when relying on traditional strategies. Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand how health systems are approaching service line growth to meet the needs of their customers.
Geographic market archetypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do different healthcare markets compare based on demographic, population, and healthcare supply factors?	Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand different markets based on their volumes and growth profile to meet the needs of their customers.
VBC in specialty care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which specialists are most engaged in value-based care today—and which will be in the next 3 years?• How are specialists participating in ACO-style models without overburdening primary care or disrupting hospital demand?• Where does it make more sense to prioritize procedural risk over specialist inclusion in ACO models?	Specialists drive the majority of healthcare costs. Consulting and accounting leaders must understand how VBC models are evolving to engage specialists and how this affects product value and reimbursement.
AI for clinical and coverage decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are stakeholders investing in AI for clinical decision-making?• What are their future plans, partnership strategies, and barriers to adoption?• What potential futures and inflection points should leaders anticipate?	AI is reshaping clinical decisions. Consulting and accounting leaders must understand how this affects evidence generation, product adoption, and payer-provider dynamics.
AI in revenue cycle and payment integrity operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is AI transforming revenue cycle management, including claims processing, coding, and prior authorization?• How does AI enhance payment integrity by detecting underpayments, fraud, and missed reimbursement opportunities?	AI-driven RCM tools impact how providers get paid and how value is assessed. Consulting and accounting leaders must align pricing, contracting, and value propositions with these evolving systems.

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State of the nursing workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What disconnects exist between what nurses need and what their roles and work environments provide?• What are the most urgent gaps in physical and psychological safety, staffing, workload, flexibility, and career development?• What actionable strategies can health systems use to address these gaps?	Healthcare workforce strain is intensifying. Consulting and accounting leaders must understand the root causes of dissatisfaction and turnover to support retention strategies, workplace culture, and sustainable staffing models.
Health plans growth strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the current competitive landscape in Medicare Advantage and employer-sponsored insurance?• What major initiatives are shaping the regulatory environment for these lines of business?• How are plans evolving product design and growth strategies?• What approaches are employers taking to manage high-cost drug spend?	Understanding payer growth strategies helps Consulting and accounting leaders anticipate coverage shifts, align contracting strategies, and support payer partnerships more effectively.
10 trends impacting health systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the major highlights, messages, and data points about and impacting health systems?	Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand the trends impacting health systems so that they can address the needs of their clients.
Strategic planners survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the intentions of health system strategy leaders related to spending, growth, operations and partnership?	Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand the priorities of health system strategists to meet the needs of their customers.
State of pediatric hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the financial outlook for pediatric hospitals, especially in light of OBBBA?• What cohort-specific margin insights can be drawn from pediatric hospital performance?• What pediatric-specific solutions are emerging to address financial sustainability, including strategies around margin management, family financial experience, and new growth avenues?	Pediatric hospitals face unique financial pressures and operational challenges. Consulting and accounting leaders must understand these dynamics to better support pediatric care delivery, align partnership strategies, and anticipate shifts in demand and investment across pediatric service lines.
Site-of-care-shift trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which high-value procedures are shifting from inpatient to outpatient settings?• Are shifts consistently moving toward lower-cost care sites?• What are the most common site-of-care switch types (e.g., clinic to HOPD)?	Healthcare procedures are rapidly shifting from inpatient to outpatient settings, with joint replacements and other high-value services leading the trend. These shifts vary significantly by geography and are influenced by local market dynamics, physician independence, and payer incentives. Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand how these shifts play out in different markets profile to meet the needs of their customers.