

Current research agenda for consulting and accounting firms

Topic	What we're researching	Why it matters
2026 State of the industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the shifts shaping the policy environment, utilization patterns, and coverage mix? Which of these are temporary and which are structural? How will increased competition and changing power dynamics impact the hospital business model, care delivery networks, specialty pharmacy, and data as a strategic asset? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The healthcare industry is in a period of recalibration. Organizations are revisiting how they prioritize topline growth relative to their ability to secure sustainable margins, pivoting their business strategies accordingly – and altering the traditional power dynamics and relationships within our industry.
2025 Policy landscape response/strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will uncertainty and volatility in the policy landscape influence healthcare organizations? What are the key metrics you need to assess for your business and market? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting and accounting firms need to understand how their customers and partners are thinking through how they will respond to policy turmoil. Consulting and accounting leaders need to know what new problems their customers and partners are facing.
Geographic market archetypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do different health care markets compare based on demographic, population, and health care supply factors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting and accounting firms can use market archetypes to understand how their customers' needs and priorities differ by market.
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? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting and accounting firms need to understand big trends in service lines and their impacts to service line business and operations to meet the needs of their customers.
Service line management/state of service lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is going on with service lines as a model of organization today? What are common org structures for service lines? What's working/not working? What service lines do health systems have, and which ones are they prioritizing? Is this changing? Should it be changing? How can service lines collaborate to better care for multi-morbid patients and/or appeal to consumer preferences? What creative ways are orgs restructuring their service lines to better deliver care and achieve strategic goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulting and accounting firms need to understand how to help their service line customers focus on strategically growing volumes, revenue, and margin while dealing with operational "fires" like workforce issues and capacity constraints.

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Health plan clinical cost management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should plans prioritize to achieve the highest ROI in clinical cost management? • How can plans integrate key functions under the purview of the chief medical officer? • What clinical interventions have proven effective in managing member health and medical spend? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health plan cost management tactics will impact the volume and revenue outlook for clients of consulting and accounting firms. • Consulting and accounting firms need market intelligence on what payers are doing to manage their own financial performance and how that could impact other players in the ecosystem.
Ambulatory network design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the capabilities that health systems need to make the best use of ambulatory networks for the sustainability of their businesses? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health systems view ambulatory as their primary opportunity for physical footprint growth. But most health systems aren't experts in designing and operating large ambulatory businesses. Consulting firms need to understand how they can help health systems appreciate the unique nuances of operating ambulatory sites successfully.
Benchmarking content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the benchmarks for workforce span of control and turnover? • What are the benchmarks for health system margin? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative data for staffing analysis • Orient margin performance to the larger market
2025 volume forecasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will my market volumes look like in five and ten years? • How will growth rates vary by service line, sub-service line, and across care sites and demographic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting and accounting leaders need to understand future projections for volumes and the implications of those forecasts for their customers and partners.
Care variation reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is fundamentally new in how systems are approaching CVR? • What is the end goal of CVR? What is the pathway to get there? • Where are the biggest cost and ALOS reduction opportunities when looking across the system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising costs, tighter margins, and mergers and acquisitions have changed the landscape for CVR • Care shifts from inpatient to outpatient and ambulatory, and from treating DRGs to disease clusters, have changed the opportunities for CVR

** If you are interested in participating in any of these active research studies, contact your account manager.*