



2026 research agenda

In 2026, Advisory Board is researching the most important trends and innovations shaping healthcare — including hospital margins, primary care, AI in revenue cycle management, and service line growth. Our research will help organizations understand emerging challenges and opportunities in healthcare, and make informed decisions for long-term success.



STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

What are the pivotal shifts happening in healthcare right now, and how are industry stakeholders responding?

How will technology, workforce, policy, and capital changes affect the future of care delivery, financing, and innovation?

What do executives need to know about healthcare that could affect their strategy for the next 5–10 years?



HEALTH PLAN OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

How can health plans streamline operations to drive down administrative costs, improve member experience, and take advantage of AI?



AI IN REVENUE CYCLE AND PAYMENT INTEGRITY

What should leaders know about how organizations are using AI today in RCM (revenue cycle management) and PI (payment integrity)? What immediate impacts are we seeing?

What is the future impact of AI in RCM and PI on overall strategy and provider-plan dynamics?



THE AI STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

What is the state of current AI technology capabilities in healthcare?

How mature is AI implementation across various use cases at health systems and health plans?

What's the state of play on AI governance?



HOSPITAL MARGIN IMPROVEMENT

Which operational initiatives have the best yield in margin improvement?

What AI applications and solutions are yielding replicable margin improvement within the provider operating business?



HEALTH SYSTEM MARKET ARCHETYPES

What are the different growth models for health systems depending on variable market characteristics?

How can we classify the growth models for strategic guidance and prescriptive growth plans?



NURSING AND WORKFORCE

How can health systems evolve their workforce to meet the demands of the future?

In what ways can nursing advance health systems' operational efficiency and cost-reduction goals, without increasing nurse workload?



SERVICE LINE MARKET TRENDS AND SERVICE LINE GROWTH

What are the emerging trends that leaders need to plan for in cardiovascular, oncology, women's health, infusion, and orthopedics?

How should health systems prioritize services differently for growth? How has margin performance changed across services?

How are organizations finding less crowded lanes?



HEALTH SYSTEM PHARMACY

How are hospitals and health systems evolving their drug purchasing and formulary decisions amid changing financial and policy incentives?



CARDIAC CATH AND EP LAB EFFICIENCY AND GROWTH

What are the common barriers to cardiac cath and electrophysiology (EP) lab efficiency and growth?

What tactics are providers using to keep pace with patient demand?



HEALTH SYSTEM PURCHASING

Which factors are becoming more (and less) important in provider purchasing decisions as care shifts toward ambulatory settings?



VBC IN SPECIALTY CARE

How are providers and health plans effectively engaging specialists in value-based care?

Which specialists are they prioritizing first? What financial and clinical models are driving successful engagement?



CANCER PATIENT NAVIGATION

How are organizations improving oncology patient management, adherence to care, and patient retention?



Learn more: E-mail ask@advisory.com to talk with our team about these topics.



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