

The Dollars and Sense of Outsourcing Nurse Triage: A Study on Savings

It's no secret that today's health systems and providers are under increasing pressure to control costs. In a post-COVID environment, hospitals and other patient care facilities are still trying to recover from the billions of dollars in lost revenue coupled with current increased operating expenses. **In fact, more than 33% of hospitals are operating on negative margins.**

Our study revealed that one of the most promising avenues for **cost savings lies in outsourcing nurse triage** during periods of low call volume, with the most rapid financial benefits being realized during the third shift when nurse services aren't in high demand.

The Connection Between Nurse Staffing Ratios and Patient Outcomes

Before diving into the study, let's review patient care.

To promote patient safety, it's critical to maintain high staffing ratios even during periods of low activity. While it may seem that one nurse is sufficient to handle the workload, a closer look at call arrival patterns and call urgency reveals a different reality. When two or three calls coincide, the presence of two nurses is necessary to ensure a standard of care is met.

Unfortunately, nurse staffing ratios tend to be extremely low at night because these hours are notoriously challenging to staff adequately. The reduced number of nurses required during this shift makes it even more crucial to have reliable backup support available, such as a nurse call center, on an as-needed basis.

Cost-Savings & Improving Patient Care: A Solution

Back to our study – **with call volumes lowering during the late-night hours, it's clear that potential cost-savings lie within outsourcing calls from 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.** To test this theory, we conducted an analysis by randomly selecting data from the clinical call volumes of two of our health system clients for the month of July 2023.

The results were eye-opening, especially considering the cost savings highlighted below were only for 3rd shift. See the graph below.

3rd Shift Outsourced	Southeastern Health System	Northeastern Health System
Annual In-House Cost	\$257,462 In-House Cost	\$257,462 In-House Cost
Annual Outsource Cost	\$103,510 Outsource Cost	\$96,091 Outsource Cost
Annual Cost Savings	\$153,952 Cost Savings	\$161,371 Cost Savings

Improving Patient Safety with Nurse Triage Solutions

The strategic outsourcing of nurse triage and call center services during periods of reduced call volume, particularly in the third shift, not only ensures cost containment but also upholds the critical aspect of improving patient safety. **The financial gains realized during these low-volume hours underscore the viability of this approach for health systems seeking to optimize their operational efficiency and financial performance.**

About AccessNurse

AccessNurse is the premier provider of medical call center solutions serving over 500 healthcare organizations in the United States. For the past 28 years, we've supported our clients in handling over 40 million patient calls. AccessNurse provides 24/7 telephone nurse triage and answering services for prestigious healthcare organizations across the country.

