



10 Strategic Priorities for Leaders in 2026

As industry pressures mount—workforce strain, financial pressure, access challenges and quality demands—clarity of direction is key.

Today's healthcare leaders must navigate these realities with practical execution-focused strategies that address the challenges of an overstretched workforce while sustaining high performance and patient trust. The [following 10 priorities](#) from an ACHE Blog post represent the issues that should be at the top of healthcare leaders' agendas this year.

1. Foster a Workforce for Tomorrow
2. Strengthen Financial Resilience
3. Advance Health Equity and Access
4. Operationalize AI Responsibly
5. Recommit to Clinician Well-Being
6. Redesign Care Delivery for the Aging Population
7. Prepare for Greater Value-Based Care Risk
8. Improve Patient Experience Through Operational Excellence
9. Fortify Technology and Operational Resilience
10. Lead with Clarity, Accountability and Purpose

These 10 priorities signal a move away from incremental fixes toward more deliberate, accountable leadership. The path forward will require clarity of purpose, disciplined execution and a willingness to address the root causes of inefficiency. By focusing on accuracy, access, trust and performance, healthcare leaders can navigate change while delivering sustainable, patient-centered care.

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Grow Your Career at Congress

As a healthcare leader, you're focused on building leadership skills, advancing your career and gaining systems-level insights to navigate a complex and evolving industry. That's why the [Congress on Healthcare Leadership](#) is the perfect venue to accelerate your career aspirations.

To help address your career goals, the following educational sessions provide actionable insights and practical strategies:

- ["A Practical Approach to Accelerate Your Career Trajectory"](#)
- ["Student Session: How to Discern Between Criticism and Constructive Feedback"](#)
- ["Creating a Career Aligned With Personal Mission, Values and Strengths"](#)
- ["From Specialist to Generalist: Stepping Outside of Your Comfort Zone to Grow Your Career"](#)
- ["Transitioning From the Military to Civilian Healthcare"](#)
- ["Cultivating Career Growth and Relationships With Intention: Leadership Lessons From Mid-Career Executives"](#)

These are just a sample of the many career-related sessions this year at Congress, which begins March 2. Whether you're a CEO, physician, emerging leader or a student, there are plenty of programs to meet your career and professional needs.

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The Value of the FACHE® Credential

As an ACHE Member, you forge connections. As a Fellow, you forge the future.

Becoming a [Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives](#) sets you apart as a leader who plans big and acts with intention. More than a professional badge, those five letters are a recognition of a lifetime of learning alongside those most committed to advancing the field. It's proof of your expertise in leadership and knowledge of the field of healthcare management, as the following Fellows testify:

"To me, FACHE is more than a title—it's a symbol of accountability, ethical leadership and service," says John Tejeda, DHA, FACHE, president and CEO, Perspective Health Partners Mission Viejo, Calif. "It signifies that I hold myself to the highest standards and continuously strive to grow in knowledge, impact and effectiveness."

"Having that certification, I think gives another level of trust to your community that you're serving, that you really have the tools or at least the network to help support you in order to do what's right for patient care in that community," says Ashley Vertuno, FACHE, CEO, HCA Florida JFK North Hospital, West Palm Beach, Fla.

Prove your commitment today and start [earning](#) your FACHE credential.

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Building Trust Through Transparent Decision-Making

Leading a healthcare organization means making difficult decisions daily. You're balancing patient needs with financial realities, community benefit with institutional sustainability and immediate demands with long-term viability.

When you communicate these decisions transparently, acknowledging both the trade-offs and the values guiding your choices, you build something invaluable: trust.

Learned from an article in *Healthcare Executive*, below are five tips for honest communication.

1. **Start with shared values.** Begin by connecting the decision to values everyone can appreciate, e.g., quality patient care, community health and workforce well-being. This creates common ground before introducing difficult trade-offs.

2. **Name the tension explicitly.** Acknowledge that you're choosing between competing goods, not between right and wrong. A former CMO once said, "If both options feel right and wrong in different ways, you're probably close to the real issue." Healthcare leaders constantly balance access versus quality, individual versus population health and future versus current needs.

3. **Explain your reasoning.** Walk through how you weighed different factors. What data informed your thinking? Which stakeholders did you consult? What alternatives did you consider? This transparency doesn't mean a decision-by-committee, but it does show a thoughtful process.

4. **Acknowledge the downsides.** Every significant decision has negative consequences for someone. Acknowledging these impacts directly, rather than minimizing them, shows respect and opens the door for problem-solving.

5. **Commit to monitoring outcomes.** Promise to track whether the decision achieves its intended goals and be willing to adjust if it doesn't. This shows you're making the best decision you can with current information, not claiming infallibility.

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Premier Corporate Partner Resources for You

ACHE's Premier Corporate Partners are proud to offer [complimentary resources](#), such as on-demand content, white papers and articles, to help address critical issues in your organization.

In-Person Education

Feb. 9–Feb. 10

2025 San Diego Cluster

March 2–March 4

2026 Congress on Healthcare Leadership

June 14–Oct. 20

2026 Executive Program

Virtual Interactive Education

Jan. 27–Feb. 24

Live virtual sessions begin Feb. 3

Key Financial Principles for the Nonfinancial Healthcare Executive

Feb. 3–12

Live virtual sessions begin Feb. 10

Workplace Transformation: How to Promote Clinician Wellness and Create a Roadmap for Organizational Change

March 9–March 27

Live virtual sessions begin March 16

Genfluence: How to Lead a Multigenerational Workforce

Complimentary Webinars

Feb. 3

Reimaging Maternal Health: Innovations and the Future of Care

Feb. 4

UCSF Health's Journey in AI-Driven Infusion Operational Efficiency

Feb. 5

Hospital-Based Caregiver Support: A Feasible and Impactful Opportunity

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March 2–4

Houston

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