

THE STATE OF THE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE IN 2026

New national survey findings reveal rising pressure, shifting priorities, and what independent practices need next.

Based on a survey of 360 independent physician-owned ambulatory practice leaders.

A NATIONAL SNAPSHOT OF INDEPENDENT PRACTICES

360
TOTAL
RESPONDENTS

210 PHYSICIANS / CLINICAL LEADERS
150 PRACTICE MANAGERS & ADMINS



INDEPENDENCE REMAINS THE GOAL

94%

have been approached about acquisition in the past 2 years

69%

CONFIDENT THEY'LL REMAIN INDEPENDENT OVER THE NEXT 3-5 YEARS

62%

engaged in acquisition discussions

CONFIDENCE

PRESSURE



More than 1 in 3 practices were approached 4+ times in two years.

Independent practices remain committed to independence, even as acquisition interest continues to grow.

FINANCIAL PRESSURE IS INTENSIFYING



54%

REPORT INCREASED FINANCIAL PRESSURE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

Pressure rises with size:
82% of large practices report increasing financial strain

24%

report complete or high visibility into revenue leakage

Financial pressure is growing, while many practices still lack clear visibility into the issues affecting performance.

OPERATIONAL STRAIN IS WIDESPREAD

Clinicians 65%
65% say clinicians spend at least 1 hour daily on documentation outside patient visits

Manual Work 44%
44% cite manual work and multiple process steps as a top barrier to efficient data exchange

Staffing Role 31%
Every staffing role was cited by at least 31% of respondents as difficult to recruit or retain

Operational strain looks different by practice size, with smaller practices often feeling staffing pressure fastest, and larger groups managing greater workflow complexity.

Top documentation burdens:

- ✓ medical record updates & notes
- ✓ prior authorizations
- ✓ reporting & compliance paperwork
- ✓ denial management
- ✓ appeals

TECHNOLOGY IS NOW ESSENTIAL TO PRACTICE STABILITY

88%

believe AI and automation could deliver at least moderate improvements to practice efficiency

57% ↑

say automation-enabled workflows could greatly improve efficiency, particularly for documentation and administrative tasks

79% ↑

say technology is critical to long-term stability

Practices increasingly view technology as essential to improving efficiency, stability, and long-term performance.

Veradigm data on file, March 2026.

INDEPENDENCE DEPENDS MORE THAN EVER ON HOW PRACTICES OPERATE

Read the full 2026 State of Independent Practice Report, available May 5, 2026.