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HOW LEADING CARDIOVASCULAR CENTERS STAY AHEAD OF OPERATIONAL, FINANCIAL, & CLINICAL CHALLENGES

AT A GLANCE

Our first white paper in this series, "Looking Ahead to 2026: The Top Trends Every CV Leader Needs to Know", outlined some of the challenges facing the healthcare landscape. Hospitals and healthcare teams are navigating one of the most volatile and resource-constrained environments in decades. Workforce shortages, regulatory demands, accreditation pressures, and intensifying financial constraints are converging at a moment when patient acuity and volumes continue to rise.

This white paper expands upon the dominant forces shaping hospital operations in 2026, drawing on nationally published studies and insights from Biome's work with cardiovascular leaders, to share strategies aimed at mitigating some of the most pressing challenges.

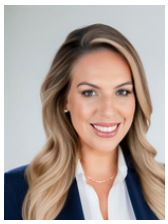
REALITIES SHAPING HOSPITALS IN 2026

- **Staffing shortages & rising labor costs** continue to strain operations and reduce capacity.
- **Accreditation & regulatory demands** are increasing, creating greater administrative burden and compliance pressure.
- **Financial headwinds are intensifying**, with margins tightening and reimbursement failing to keep pace.
- **Clinical quality expectations are rising**, driven by expanding episodic payment models, advanced therapies, and risk-adjusted metrics.
- **Hospitals must adopt "no-regrets" strategies**- standardized pathways, data integration, efficiency improvements, and cross-team coordination, to remain resilient in 2026.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Top cardiovascular centers are navigating staffing, regulatory, financial, & quality pressures by strengthening workforce models, standardizing pathways, integrating data, & expanding cross-functional collaboration.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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ABOUT BIOME

For over a decade, Biome has been partnering with ambitious healthcare centers who want to maximize clinical, financial, & operational performance across the service line. Our mission is to provide health systems with leading solutions that enable robust performance improvement projects & optimize value of care.

HOW LEADING CV CENTERS STAY AHEAD OF TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Reinventing the Workforce Through Flexibility & Role Optimization

- Hospitals are partnering with educational institutions and community organizations to create new pathways into health care careers(AHA Health Care Workforce Report, 2025).
- Programs are elevating APPs to stabilize clinic and procedural coverage, a strategy recommended by national workforce analyses (Business of Cardiology Intensive Highlights Importance of Addressing the CV Workforce Crisis).
- Innovations in cardiovascular care models and workflows, such as redesigned clinic schedules, APP-driven triage and follow-up, and streamlined procedural pathways, along with more flexible team-based care deployments (Feature | A Workforce in Crisis: Navigating the Cardiovascular Clinician Shortage).

Transforming Accreditation & Regulatory Readiness Into a Continuous Process

- Leading programs use concurrent abstraction to maintain continuous readiness, aligning with ACC NCDR and STS best practices (ACC NCDR Data Quality Program, 2025; STS National Database Standards, 2025).
- Using continuous analytics to identify documentation gaps and variance trends, combined with automated verification steps, minimizes compliance risk and decreases administrative burden.
- Performing monthly reviews (audits) of a sample of charts to catch missing elements, and using standardized documentation templates to ensure accurate coding and appropriate risk adjustment.

Protecting Margins Through Advanced Financial Intelligence

- Implementing procedure-level contribution margin models that integrate implant cost, cath lab/OR utilization time, labor, and revenue.
- Utilizing real utilization, complication rates, and device-specific cost data when preparing for contract renegotiations (AHRMM, 2025)
- Preparing for bundled payments by modeling historical spending, post-acute utilization, and readmission patterns for TEAMS-eligible episodes. (CMS TEAMS Final Rule, 2025).

Reducing Clinical Variation Through Standardized, Clinician-Led Pathways

- Standardizing pre-procedure optimization for TAVR, TEER, AF ablation, and LAAO which reflects national recommendations for improving outcomes and reducing LOS (ACC/AHA Valve Guidelines, 2024; 2023 ACC/AHA/ACCP/HRS Guideline for Diagnosis & Management of Atrial Fibrillation).
- Reducing duplicate testing to align with Choosing Wisely and appropriate use criteria (ABIM Foundation Choosing Wisely, 2025).
- Implementation of early discharge pathways which are increasingly adopted, as evidence shows reductions in LOS and improved safety (Impact of Early D/C After TAVR On Permanent PPM Rates).

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HOW LEADING CV CENTERS STAY AHEAD OF TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Integrating Clinical + Operational + Financial Data for Unified Decision-Making

- Integration of EMR, registry, cost-accounting, and implant data to support unified clinical–financial decision-making, consistent with national guidance for value-based care. (ASTP, 2025)
- Holding monthly cross-functional performance rounds (clinical, operations, finance, supply chain) to review outcomes, cost variation, and opportunities—which aligns with AHA recommendations for value-based transformation. (AHA)
- Adopting AI-driven risk prediction and quality surveillance tools (Harvard Medical School)

> **Healthcare doesnt need more dashboards- it needs clarity. Overwhelming information streams can blur the message. When clinical, operational, and financial data can be delivered in a common language, leaders can act with precision and not guesswork. - Javier Valle, Chief Medical Officer**

Strengthening Cross-Functional Collaboration & Leadership Alignment

- High-performing CV programs consistently highlight multidisciplinary leadership huddles and unified analytics as core to sustained improvement.
- Creation of steering committees for pathways and accreditation mirror structures endorsed by major quality and accreditation bodies.
- Embedding finance partners in clinical strategy improves cost visibility and operational alignment.