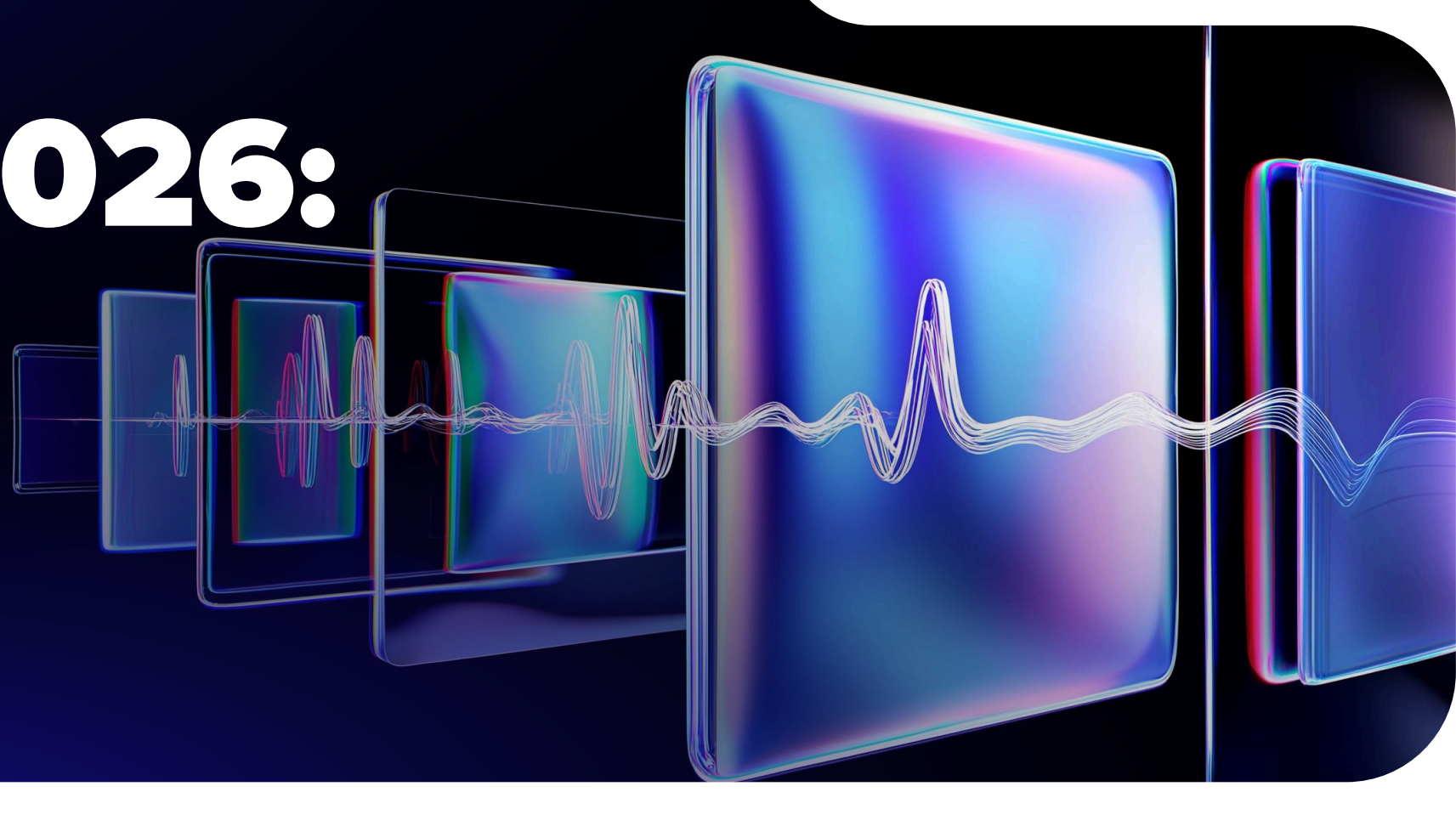# Healthcare 2026: 4 Numbers That Matter

Healthcare is at a turning point — urgent action is essential. Agentic AI is your competitive advantage to cut costs, overcome workforce shortages, and deliver results in patient care and finances. Every delay gives your competitors a head start. Unlock faster decisions, stronger loyalty, and better outcomes now with agentic AI.

Here are 4 numbers you can't ignore if you want to win in 2026
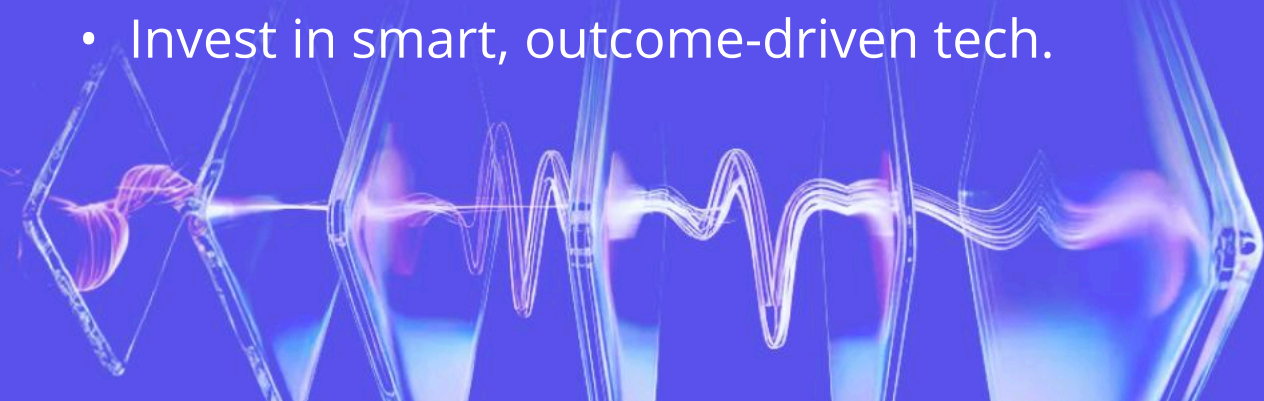
8.5%
Medical Cost Surge

- Pressure on healthcare's bottom line is a challenge hospitals face, as budgets stretch thinner and leaders scramble for solutions.
- U.S. medical costs are stuck at **8.5%** growth in 2026 — the 4th year of relentless increases.
- Prescription costs, especially GLP-1 drugs for weight loss and diabetes, are the largest drivers, along with overhead everywhere.

WHY AGENTIC AI NOW

- Imagine a hospital that slashes operating costs not by cutting corners, but by letting agentic AI anticipate, automate, and eliminate inefficiencies in real time.
- Organizations using AI-powered, digital-first care save millions; their physical therapy programs alone stop up to 80% of unnecessary surgeries, giving back precious time and resources. ROI can reach 3.2 to 1.

ACT

- Don't wait for costs to outpace you — shift to care models that reward outcomes, not volume.
- Deploy agentic AI across digital workflows to cut overhead where it hurts most.
- Invest in smart, outcome-driven tech.

Truth: If your technology doesn't show fast financial value, it's time to rethink your strategy. The future belongs to those who put agentic AI — and measurable impact — at the core.

10%
Workforce Shortage

- Workforce shortages will soar to **10% in 2026**. Imagine a clinic where a single nurse cares for an entire community — now, picture that workload growing, and resources shrinking, as the population ages.
- By 2030, 72M Americans will be 65+. That's millions who need more help, more often, and with more complex conditions — while the pool of caregivers shrinks.
- Fewer hands will face mountains of work. Picture veteran nurses juggling dozens of patients, exhausted by paperwork and chasing urgent calls, while skilled candidates remain out of reach.

The urgency is at its peak: Agentic AI is your indispensable ally. It doesn't just fill gaps — it transforms the way care teams deliver, organize, and sustain care, even when people are stretched thin.

ACT

- Agentic AI is essential to bridge workforce gaps — efficiency and automation outperform hiring.
- Accelerate investments in AgeTech, remote patient monitoring (RPM), and AI-driven automation to empower existing staff and scale care.
- Deploy ambient clinical intelligence (ACI) and agentic AI solutions to automate documentation, reduce administrative burdens, and directly combat burnout.
- By 2030, 72M Americans will be 65+, putting pressure on limited caregivers — agentic AI enables complex, coordinated care without increasing headcount.
- Workforce shortage + aging population = urgent need for automated, AI-enabled solutions.
- Hiring alone can't close the gap — prioritize efficiency and automation driven by agentic AI.

INVEST IN

- AgeTech and RPM for continuous monitoring and lower readmissions. AI-first, agentic solutions like ACI to streamline workflows and support clinician well-being.
- AI-powered innovation for efficiency: Continuous vital sign tracking with RPM supported by AI enables remote chronic care and reduces hospitalizations.
- Tech-enabled, agentic AI efficiency to overcome persistent workforce shortages and meet rising care demands.

18%
Consumer-Driven Change

- Patients are CEOs of their own health, pushed by rising costs and easy access to digital tools. Picture Maria, a mother juggling two jobs, searching online for a provider who gives her real-time pricing and a fast virtual appointment — she switches in a heartbeat if she can't get what she needs.
- Insurance premiums will increase **18%**, making care out of reach for many families. Millions could lose coverage or look elsewhere for affordable care.

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Every day, people choose convenience and clarity. If you're not using agentic AI for quick answers, easy scheduling, and transparent billing, you're losing them.

- Agentic AI explains costs, streamlines every step, and delivers healthcare that feels deeply personal and responsive.
- Now is the time to create digital front doors and automate scheduling, so every patient touchpoint is simple — powered by AI that's always learning and improving.
- If you don't compete on experience, agile, fresh players with agentic AI will win over your patients.

The affordability crunch is breaking old loyalties.

- Imagine 24% of patients walking away if virtual visits aren't offered — because they say they would.
- Young patients will pay out-of-pocket just to be seen faster, leaving behind slow, outdated insurance models.

Trust is everything. You win it with:

- Pricing that's clear in real time with the help of AI.
- Seamless digital interactions so patients always feel in control, thanks to agentic AI that anticipates needs.

Don't wait for change — lead it.

- Make agentic AI part of every digital front door and scheduler.
- Bring in instant, AI-powered price transparency tools.
- Without these moves, your patients will find seamless, AI-driven care somewhere else.

Takeaway: Agentic AI is your must-have for easy, clear, and firsthand experiences that keep empowered patients loyal, even as the world shifts around them.

$10.2M
Data Breach Risk

- Picture the hospital boardroom after a cyberattack — budgets in chaos, trust shaken, and reputations on the line. Digitization amplifies these risks. The average U.S. healthcare data breach now costs **$10.2M** — a staggering figure with real-world consequences.
- To fuel smarter care, organizations need data to flow freely. But more data means more risk. Agentic AI protects this data, giving leaders the power to unlock valuable analytics while keeping everything safe and compliant.
- Imagine agentic AI as a digital guardian — constantly monitoring, blocking threats, and keeping your data under lock and key, so your teams focus on care and innovation, not damage control.
- Organizations that lack strong AI governance or oversight face costly breaches played out in public view. The result? Lost trust and significant financial loss.

ACT

- Treat cybersecurity as life-or-death for your patients and brand, not just a job for IT.
- Deploy agentic AI for always-on threat detection, rapid response, and automated safeguards woven into every process.
- Make security-driven AI governance the foundation for all innovations.
- Agentic AI spots problems before they happen, enforce vital safeguards, and adapt quickly as new risks emerge — shielding sensitive health data at every turn.
- Use agentic AI solutions beyond security — think revenue management and prediction — always with top-level protection.

Simply put: Only agentic AI delivers the speed, control, and security healthcare systems need to innovate boldly and scale digital health with true confidence.

Bottom Line

- Act now — agentic AI is your tool for rapid, measurable healthcare transformation.
- Boost ROI, empower teams, win patient loyalty, and secure your future by making AI the core of your strategy.
- Bold moves today prime tomorrow's leaders — don't let competitors get ahead.

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