



What COOs Are Working on Right Now

Shifting focus of AI governance from IT to operations

COOs are restructuring AI governance to sit under their leadership. With this model, executives can maintain alignment on the motives for integrating AI while evaluating how implementation can optimize operational efficiencies.

Transforming partnership framework to advocate for making **BETTER** deals, not **MORE** deals

While strategy teams are often seen as eager to make as many deals as possible, COOs are focused on shifting the emphasis toward higher-quality partnerships. This approach prioritizes impact and alignment over volume, aiming to move the dial through more thoughtful, value-driven collaborations.

Working to diagnose problems before rushing to prescribe a solution

COOs are moving away from being presented with vendor options and retroactively figuring out how to integrate them into their systems. Instead, they are shifting focus to first understanding their operational challenges and then seeking out solutions that directly address those needs.

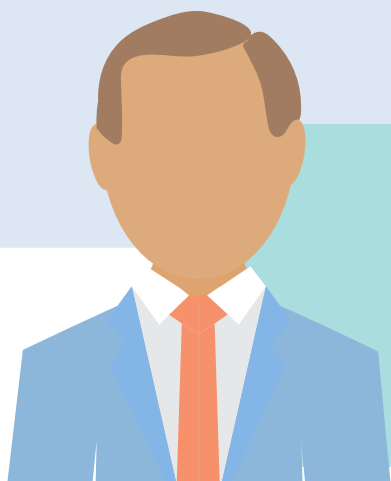
Avoiding 'reinventing the wheel', focus on standardizing procurement decisions

Standardization gives operations teams a stronger foundation for procurement decision-making. By eliminating the need to start from scratch with vendors, teams are able to move more quickly—ultimately speeding time to procurement.

Key Quotes

*"Instead of a hammer looking for a nail, **we wanted to be grounded in a problem**, which is what the patient wants and what the right financial thing is to do."*

*"'Less is more.' We had over 600 different projects when I took over the COO role, **most of which were not impactful**. There are hundreds if not thousands of vendors who work in a space but less is more."*



Get to Know the COO Persona

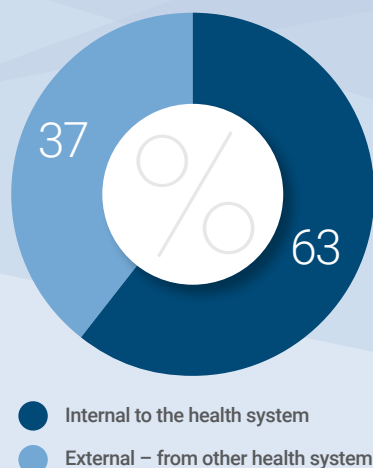
COO in Brief

COOs provide operational leadership and management across a broad scope to ensure the health system performs effectively and continues to grow. They typically report to the CEO but collaborate with other executives—such as the CSO on strategy, the CFO on budgeting and finance, and the CNO on care team strategy. As stewards of cost management, COOs often operate behind the scenes to drive organizational performance.



Audit of Leading Health System COO Profiles

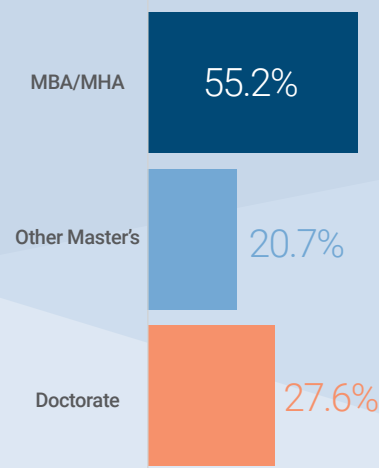
Where are COOs Hired From?



How Long Have COOs Been in Seat?

4.8 years
Average years in role

What Education Do COOs Have?



Obstacles and Investment Decision Drivers

Pain Points That May Impact Strategy Execution

- ✓ Substantial pressure to reduce costs forcing increased level of oversight and time investment into new and existing industry partner contracts
- ✓ Increased system merger and acquisition activity, creates added hurdles in creating a unified culture with standardized processes and economies of scale
- ✓ Urgency to bend labor cost growth curve, forcing need to automate certain workforce tasks (and/or outsource) and see swift and significant ROI in reducing cost and possibly non-clinician FTE requirement
- ✓ Lack of centralized data and dashboards to keep pulse on issues across system
- ✓ Labor shortages, particularly in clinical roles; management of hybrid/remote workforce in a post-pandemic environment

COO Checklist for Choosing Solutions

- ✓ Solution reduces labor load with both hard ROI (e.g., reduced FTEs) and soft ROI (e.g., reduced admin burden, frustration)
- ✓ Solution has clear metrics that would define success across the entire health system
- ✓ Seamless interoperability with current systems
- ✓ Established continuity plans, willing to jointly scenario plan to identify risks for disruption, potential back-up plans
- ✓ Low compliance risk (e.g., data sharing, price transparency)



Get to Know the COO Persona

2025 COO Strategic Priorities and Opportunities

These are the top ten rated priorities (out of a list of 24) in The Academy's survey of Leading Health System Chief Operating Officers conducted in late 2024

Top 10 Strategic Priorities for COOs

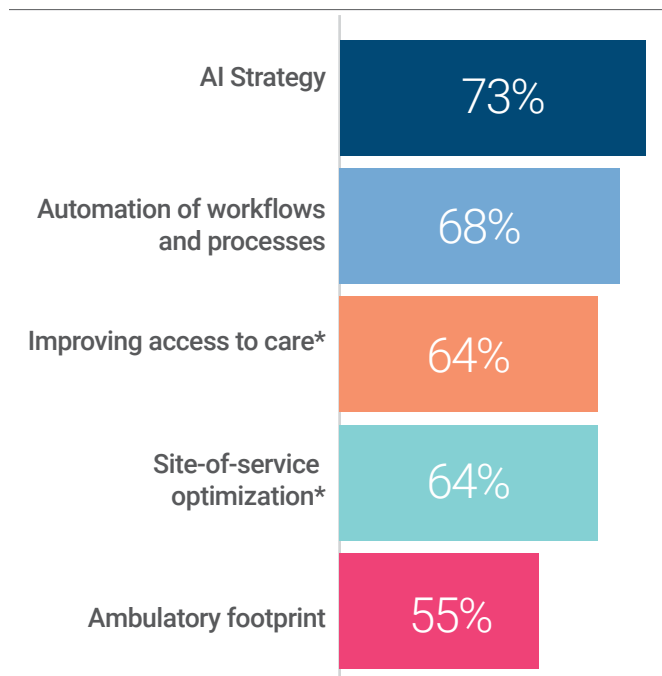
- 1 Operational efficiencies for care delivery
- 2 Improving access to care
- 3 Strengthening the workforce
- 4 Cyberthreat detection and response
- 5 Ambulatory footprint

- 6 Strategic cost management
- 7 Site-of-service optimization*
- 7 Inpatient capacity/infrastructure*
- 9 Reducing care team administrative burden
- 10 Automation of workflows and processes*
- 10 Consumer-centered care delivery*

* Indicates a tie

Top 5 Priorities Rated "More Important"

Percent of COOs who rated category "More Important" in 2025 versus 2024



* Indicates a tie

Top 5 Improvement Opportunities

Relative to performance today

- 1 Outsourcing or offshoring select roles/services
- 2 Divesting underperforming assets/services
- 3 Automation of workflows and processes
- 4 Risk-based payment strategy
- 5 Consolidating select clinical services



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2025 COO Executive Priorities Survey Results

The chart below depicts the complete results for priority and improvement opportunity rankings for COOs according to The Health Management Academy's 2025 Executive Priorities Survey.

Priority	Priority Rank	Improvement Opportunity Rank
Operational efficiencies for care delivery*	1	19
Improving access to care*	2	8
Strengthening the workforce*	3	20
Cyberthreat detection and response	4	24
Ambulatory footprint	5	14
Strategic cost management*	6	21
Site-of-service optimization*	*7	*9
Inpatient capacity/infrastructure	*7	*17
Reducing care team administrative burden*	9	7
Automation of workflows and processes*	*10	3
Consumer-centered care delivery*	*10	*9
AI strategy*	12	6
Healthcare affordability*	13	13
Supply chain efficiency and resilience	14	15
Risk-based payment strategy	15	4
Health equity*	16	23
Care at home strategy	*17	*11
Organizational literacy with data and technology*	*17	16
Consumer data & analytics	19	*11
Consolidating select clinical services	20	5
Divesting underperforming assets/services	21	2
Streamlining vendor portfolio	22	*17
ERP platform strategy	23	22
Outsourcing or offshoring select roles/services	24	1

* Indicates a tie