e4health

No Data Left Behind:
Why Staff Augmentation is the Smart Way to Tackle Patient Identity Management

The Patient Identity Problem: A Mess Worth Fixing

Imagine checking into a hospital, expecting your doctor to have your full medical history, only to find they're missing key information because the system thinks you're two different people. Not great, right? That's patient misidentification, and it's a sneaky problem hitting hospitals hard. It's not just about paperwork—it's about patient safety, huge costs, and ensuring AI tools can do their job. Black Book Research found that 35% of denied claims come from mismatched records, costing hospitals $2.5 million a year [Patient ID Now, 2025]. Worse, it leads to medical errors, extra tests, and sometimes heartbreaking outcomes.

There's momentum to fix this with efforts like the MATCH IT Act of 2025, pushing for better patient matching standards. It's a critical step, but hospitals need solutions now. That's where e4health shines, ranked the #1 HIM advisory firm by Black Book Research [Black Book, 2024]. We've helped hundreds of healthcare systems clean up their data, saving money and stress while keeping patients safe. Our secret weapon? Staff augmentation for patient identity management (PIM). Let's explore why it's the best way to get your data in order.

Why Patient Identity Issues Can Be a Nightmare

Think of your hospital's patient records as a giant filing cabinet. Now imagine someone files two folders for the same patient—or worse, mixes up one patient's info with another's. That's what we call *duplicates* (two records for one person in the same system), *overlays* (someone else's treatment on the wrong record), and *overlaps* (different records for the same person across systems). These aren't minor slip-ups—they're costly and risky.

Here's the real sting: bad data messes with AI, which needs clean, historical records to predict outcomes or tailor care [Healthcare IT Today, 2025]. Errors often stem from sloppy registration, mergers that don't sync, or rocky transitions to new EHRs. Hospitals are scrambling for a fix, and we've got one that works.

Staff Augmentation: Your Data's Best Friend

Staff augmentation is like calling in a cleanup crew who knows exactly where the mess is and how to fix it. At e4health, we've perfected this approach, and it's a total game-changer. Here's why it's the best practice for tackling patient identity issues:

1. **Saves You Serious Cash:** Hiring full-time staff to sort out duplicates seems sensible, but it's a budget-killer. Take a Pennsylvania hospital network we helped. Bringing on a handful of full-time HIM specialists would've meant hefty salaries, benefits, and costs for recruitment and training—a major hit to their bottom line. Instead, they partnered with us. We sent a small team for a few months, covering labor, training, and analytics at a fraction of the cost. The savings were substantial, freeing up funds for projects instead of paperwork. That's the kind of smart budgeting every hospital loves!

2. **Frees Your Team for What Matters:** Your HIM team is already juggling documentation, compliance, and new regulations. Asking them to tackle duplicate records is like piling on extra chores. With staff augmentation, we handle this work so your team can focus on core competencies. It's like hiring a chef to cook dinner so you can enjoy the party.

3. **Scales Like a Dream:** Patient identity issues are unpredictable. One day it's a trickle; the next, it's a flood after a merger or go-live. Full-time hires lock you into fixed costs, even when work slows. We're flexible—we scale up or down as needed. For that Pennsylvania network, we brought in 30 specialists during a COVID-driven duplicate surge, then dropped to 3 when things calmed. No waste, just the right support at the right time.

4. **Expertise That Packs a Punch:** We've been cleaning up patient identity messes for years, across hundreds of hospitals. That experience means we know the tricks—like spotting duplicates tech might miss or managing Epic transitions with 99% accuracy, as we did for a Mid-Atlantic system with 1.2 million data points. We dive deep into records, train your staff, and leave your systems stronger. With e4health, you're getting pros who've seen it all.

Real Hospitals, Real Wins: Our Success Stories

Pennsylvania Hospital Network: Saving Big While Keeping Patients Safe: A nine-hospital network in Pennsylvania was swamped with duplicate records after acquiring several facilities. COVID made it worse, with their patient portal creating up to 40 duplicates per person! We rolled in with 30 specialists to clean up their eMPI over two years, then scaled back to 3 for ongoing maintenance. They saved $4.4 million by avoiding overtime and inefficiencies.

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"Our team efficiently resolved thousands of duplicate records, restoring order and enabling their staff to prioritize patient care," said our team lead Derek Goodwin. "Their staff focused on patients while we sorted the data."

Cost Comparison: Hiring vs. Staff Augmentation
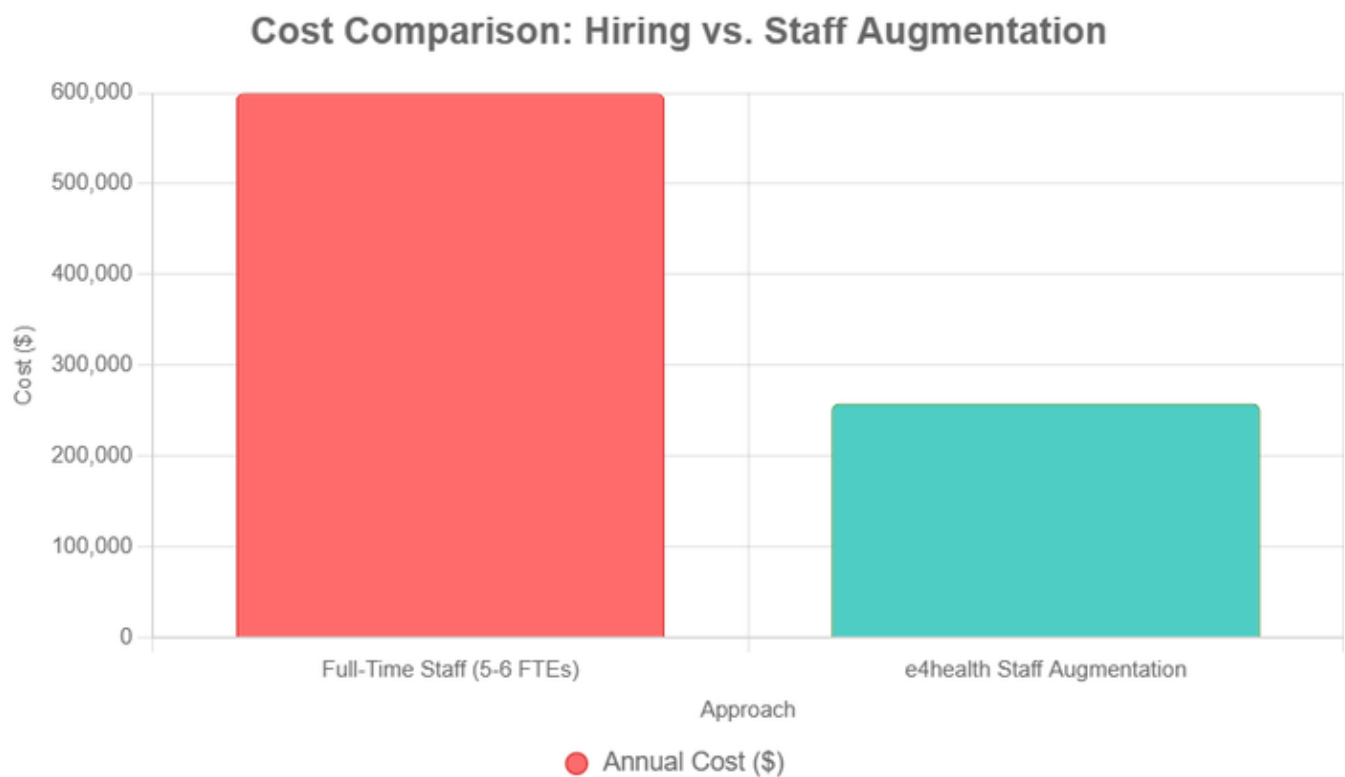
New Jersey's Largest System: A Partnership That Delivers: New Jersey's biggest healthcare system, with 15 hospitals and 300 outpatient practices, faced 2 million duplicate records before switching to Epic. We brought in 200 specialists to clean up their eMPI over two years, then supported their Epic go-live with clinical data abstraction and error fixes. We trained their team—growing it to 10 staff —and provided 24/7 coverage without extra costs. They saved money, cut go-live hiccups, and avoided denied claims. "We will always come back and we will always support in whatever need... it's been more of a partnership and a kind of support system than anything else," said our team member Stephanie Cathers, e4health Project Manager. That's teamwork that wins.
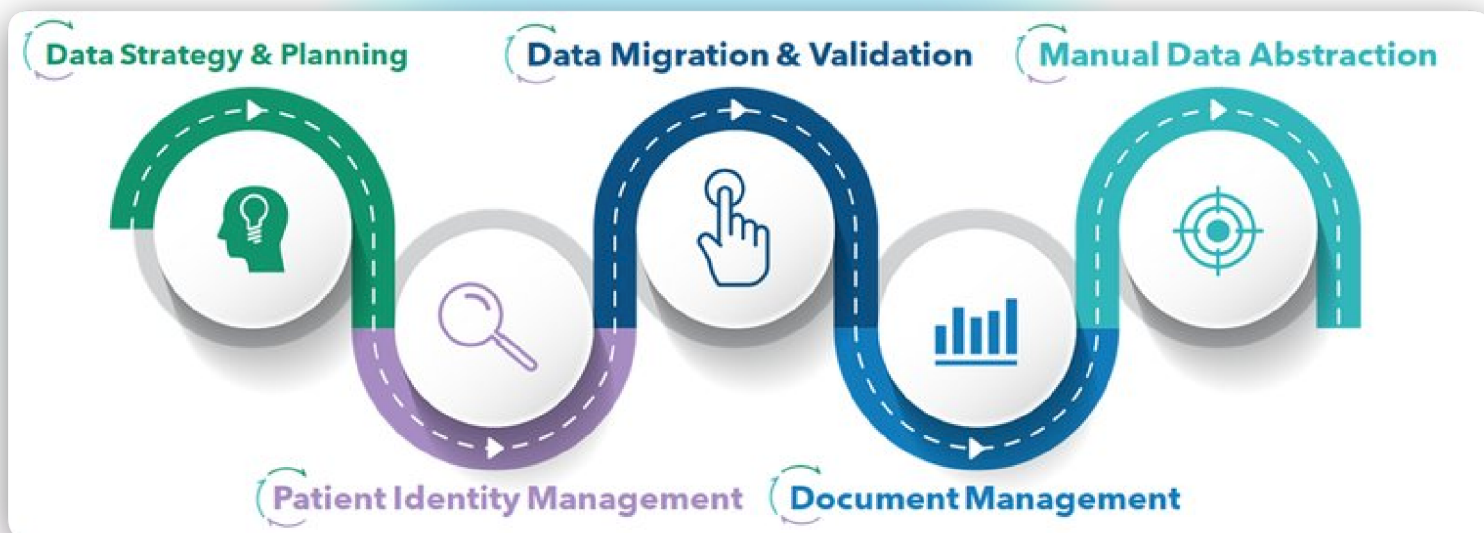
Texas-Based Health System: Precision Under Pressure: A Texas-based system hit a snag during their Epic transition, with 72,000 duplicates clogging their radiology system due to tech glitches. Their team was stretched thin, so we stepped in to clean up duplicates, manage rosters, and sync systems. Our experts dove deep into each patient record, meticulously reviewing every detail to ensure accuracy. This hands-on approach boosted data accuracy by 45% and slashed overtime costs significantly. They got their data back on track without breaking the bank, ready to deliver better care with confidence.

North Carolina Academic Center: Growing Without the Growing Pains: A North Carolina academic health system was expanding fast, adding new practices but picking up 87,035 duplicates and 150,000 overlays. We sent 4-5 specialists to clean up their eMPI over two years, shrinking one practice's duplicate queue to just 800 records. We hit every deadline, keeping their Epic system smooth. "Our team's relentless work ethic and proven collaboration ensured we met every deadline, delivering seamless performance for their Epic system," said Jim Eckel, e4health Project Manager. "They grew without data challenges holding them back."

Georgia Health System: Ready for What's Next: A Georgia-based system struggled with duplicates and errors after a 2020 expansion, with a new acquisition on the horizon. Since late 2020, we've been cleaning up their eMPI, handling indexing, and training their staff to take over. "We significantly reduced duplicates, streamlined their Epic workflows, and positioned them for future growth," said Krista Collacchi, e4health Project Manager. "As a trusted partner for years, we've empowered this system to ensure they're ready for any challenge ahead.

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Data Strategy & Planning

Data Migration & Validation

Manual Data Abstraction

Patient Identity Management

Document Management

Why This Matters (and Why You Should Care)

Clean patient records aren't just a nice-to-have—they're essential for safe care, saving money, and powering healthcare's future. With AI relying on accurate data for predictions and personalized care, messy records can lead to missed diagnoses or wasted opportunities. As hospitals shift to value-based care, they need records that match across providers—something duplicates make impossible.

Let's Get Your Data in Shape

Patient identity issues shouldn't keep you up at night. With e4health's staff augmentation, you get a partner who's been around the block, saving the day for hundreds of hospitals. We'll cut costs, free up your team, scale with your needs, and bring expertise you can't beat. Ready to make your patient records as reliable as your best doctor? Let's talk—reach out at tgoughnour@e4.health or visit www.e4.health. Together, we'll make sure no patient's story gets lost in the shuffle.

References:

- [Patient ID Now, 2025] Patient ID Now. (2025, March 12). Bipartisan Representatives Reintroduce MATCH IT Act of 2025. https://bit.ly/3DLvGpG

- [Black Book, 2024] Leading HIM & Coding Vendors Driving Breakthrough Innovation, Setting the Pace for Industry Transformation, Reports Black Book Survey.

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