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## **Physician Specialty, Gender and Self-Employment Critical Factors Impacting Pay, According to Medscape Compensation Report**

### **Family medicine sees 10% pay increase; physician participation in Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) continues dramatic rise**

NEW YORK, April 21, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- WebMD Health Corp. (NASDAQ: WBMD), the leading source of health information, today released the Medscape Physician Compensation Report <http://www.medscape.com/features/slideshow/compensation/2015/public/overview>, an annual analysis of how compensation influences physician career considerations and satisfaction. Now in its fifth year, Medscape's Annual Survey of more than 19,500 physicians across 26 specialties revealed that nearly all physicians saw a modest increase in pay in 2014, and that self-employment status, therapeutic specialty, and gender were the key drivers for physician pay in 2014.

"The physician compensation report is one of our most popular features and provides important, relevant information to doctors," said Leslie Kane, Director, Business of Medicine, Medscape. "Healthcare is rapidly changing, and we are providing a snapshot of real-time data about compensation and other influencing factors, such as career satisfaction."

### **Despite the Trend Toward Employment, Compensation is Higher Among Self-Employed**

In 2014, physicians were more inclined to pursue employment in a medical group, hospital or clinic setting than to be self-employed. However, this year's report shows those physicians who are self-employed (32%) earn significantly more than those employed (63%). On average, self-employed primary care physicians (PCPs) earn \$212,000 compared with their employed counterparts (\$189,000), and self-employed specialists, on average, earn \$329,000 compared to employed specialists (\$258,000).

"While self-employed physicians earn more, an increasing number of doctors are seeking employment within a group practice," said Michael Smith, M.D., medical director and chief medical editor, WebMD. "The data show a number of factors that may negatively impact physicians' compensation, including the end of ACO shared savings programs, competing retail clinics, meaningful use penalties, payment-reporting websites, and changes in Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes."

Physician participation in different payment models also continued to evolve. While concierge and cash-only practice models remained a tiny portion of the market (3% and 6%, respectively), participation in accountable care organizations continued to rise dramatically - growing from 3% in 2011 to 30% in this year's report, with another 7% reporting that they plan to join an ACO during 2015.

### **It Pays to Specialize: Specialists Earn Significantly More Than Primary Care Physicians**

Findings show specialists continuing to outpace PCPs in earnings, with the average annual income for PCPs at \$195,000, compared to \$284,000 for specialists. Specialties with the highest average patient care incomes are orthopedists (\$421,000), cardiologists (\$376,000), and gastroenterologists (\$370,000).

The lowest earners are pediatricians (\$189,000), family physicians (\$195,000), endocrinologists and internists (both at \$196,000). In comparison to last year, only rheumatologists experienced any large decrease in income (4%). Urologists were the only other specialists to see a decline, but by only 1%. All other physicians reported a compensation increase, with greatest pay increases among infectious disease physicians (22%), pulmonologists (15%) and emergency medicine physicians and pathologists (both 12%). Family physicians also saw a 10% increase in compensation.

Although fewer than half of PCPs—family physicians at 48% and internists at 45%—believe that they are fairly compensated, they are not the most dissatisfied physicians. Those who feel most underpaid are ophthalmologists (40%) and allergists and general surgeons (both 41%).

### **Gender Plays a Role in Both Compensation and Career Choices**

In the 2015 Medscape Report, data mirror previous years' gender divide. Male physicians earn more (\$284,000) than their female counterparts (\$215,000). Additionally, men tend to dominate the highest-paying specialties: urology (92%), orthopedics (91%), and cardiology (88%), with the highest percentages of women in the lower-paying specialties, such as pediatrics (50%) and family medicine (37%).

With regard to work schedule, more women (24%) than men (13%) are working part-time, and slightly over a third of men (36%) and about a quarter of women (23%) are self-employed.

Men and women differ regarding how they prioritize the most rewarding aspects of being a doctor. Men (34%) report they "enjoy being very good at their job and diagnoses," while women (37%) report "gratitude" and "relationships with patients" as most rewarding.

### **Satisfied? Compensation, Pursuit of Medicine and Specialty Drive Doctor Contentment**

According to the study's calculation of career satisfaction, which averages the percentage of physicians who would again choose medicine, who would again choose their specialty, and who thought they were fairly compensated, the most satisfied physicians this year are dermatologists (63%), followed by pathologists and psychiatrists at 57%. The least satisfied, from the bottom up, are internists (47%) and then nephrologists and general surgeons (48% and 49%, respectively).

Five years ago in the first Medscape Compensation report, 69% of physicians said they would choose medicine again and 61% would select their own specialty. This year, 64% would still choose medicine, but only 45% would select their own specialty. Family medicine led the list of specialties that would again choose the medical profession (79%) - but were nearly last in their inclination to choose the same specialty (32%).

According to [Medscape's 2015 Physician Lifestyle Report](#), released in January, 46% of physicians reported experiencing career burnout, a six percent increase from 2013, with some of the highest burnout rates found in family medicine and internists (50%). In the 2015 Compensation Report, family medicine and internal medicine are among the lowest-compensated physicians. Dermatologists report very low levels of job-related burnout and are consistently among the top ten earners. Dermatologists are this year's most satisfied physicians, while internists are the least satisfied.

To view the full Medscape 2015 Physician Compensation Report, visit:

<http://www.staging.medscape.com/features/slideshow/compensation/2015/public/overview>

### **Medscape Survey Methods:**

The Medscape Physician Compensation Survey: 2015 was completed by 19,500 physicians representing more than 26 specialty areas, including Medscape members and non-Medscape members, from December 30, 2014 to March 11, 2015. Respondents were invited to respond to the online survey. The margin of error for the survey was +/- 0.69% at a 95% confidence level.

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