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Doctors Feel Rewarded by Treating Patients Despite Burnout, Says Medscape Study

6th Annual Medscape Physician Compensation Report Also Reveals Money Doesn't Drive Doctors' Passion for Care

NEW YORK, April 4, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- WebMD Health Corp. (NASDAQ: WBMD), the leading source of health information, today released its annual Medscape Physician Compensation Report <http://www.medscape.com/features/slideshow/compensation/2016/public/overview> an annual analysis of how compensation influences physician career considerations and satisfaction. The 2016 report reveals that doctors still feel rewarded by treating patients despite widespread burnout,¹ and a growing number would not choose medicine if they had a 'do-over'. Additionally, physician responses show that earnings aren't the most rewarding aspect of their profession; caring for patients and being a good doctor are more important.



Now in its sixth year, the report provides in-depth analysis of how compensation influences physician career considerations and satisfaction. Medscape surveyed more than 19,000 physicians across 26 specialties. Most specialties saw an increase in pay last year from between four percent to 12 percent. Two specialties, allergy/immunology and pulmonology, saw compensation drop.

"The anticipation for our survey among the physician community has grown every year," said Leslie Kane, senior director, Business of Medicine, Medscape. "It's admirable to see that physicians are unwavering in their commitment to treating patients, even though they deal with an increasing number of challenges."

"There is no denying that doctors today are facing burnout from immense pressures, with bureaucratic tasks and paperwork topping the list.¹ Yet, the Compensation Report shows that they are fiercely committed to their professional calling," said Michael Smith, M.D., medical director and chief medical editor, WebMD. "Moreover, it's those doctors with lower salaries, like primary care physicians, that are most likely to choose medicine again. Despite the pressures, doctors remain passionate about patient care."

The Most Rewarding Aspect of Being a Doctor Is ...

- 1 Despite complaints over red tape, work requirements, and changes in the healthcare field, 98 percent of respondents found gratification in being a physician and treating patients.
- 1 About one-third of physicians cited their relationships with patients (34 percent) and being good at their job (32 percent) as the two most rewarding aspects of medicine.
- 1 Other rewarding aspects frequently mentioned include doing research, educating or training students or residents, having a flexible schedule, and relationships with colleagues.

Money Doesn't Always Equal Happiness

- 1 73 percent of family physicians and 71 percent of internists were at the top of the list of physicians most likely to choose medicine again; the report shows that family physicians (at \$207,000) and internists (at \$222,000) are at the lower end in earnings.
- 1 Those least likely to choose medicine again are plastic surgeons (47 percent), radiologists and orthopedists (both 49 percent). All three of these specialties were in the top 10 in earnings.

Who's Up, Who's Down?

- | Two specialties, allergy and pulmonology, experienced a noticeable decrease in income (-11 percent and -5 percent, respectively), from 2015.
- | Pathologists and plastic surgeons remained stable.
- | All other specialties reported an increase - the largest among rheumatologists and internists (12 percent), followed by nephrologists and dermatologists (11 percent).

Physician Compensation by Geographical Area

- | This year, the highest earnings were reported in the North Central (\$296,000) and Southeast (\$287,000) regions, while the lowest were in the Northeast (\$266,000) and Mid-Atlantic (\$268,000).
- | Geographic supply and demand continue to play a role in compensation. Uneven distribution of physician-to-patient volume, particularly in primary care, has been a problem for decades in rural and poor communities. Numerous government policies are aimed at improving access to physicians in these areas. As a result, higher incomes are found in these regions.

Men, Women and Younger Physicians

- | Female physicians make on average 24 percent less than their male peers.
- | The percentage of female physicians remains considerably lower (35 percent vs. 65 percent) but the difference is shrinking with younger physicians.
- | The number of employed physicians (versus those in private practice) is increasing, with more women than men choosing this option (72 percent vs. 59 percent).
- | Younger physicians are more likely to head toward employment, rather than private practice, even though compensation is typically lower. The rate of practice ownership decreased from 61 percent to 53 percent from 2007 to 2012, according to the American Medical Association.

To view the full Medscape 2016 Physician Compensation Report, visit:

<http://www.medscape.com/features/slideshow/compensation/2016/public/overview>

1. [Medscape Physician Lifestyle Report 2016](#)

Medscape Survey Methods:

The Medscape Physician Compensation Survey was completed by 19,000 physicians representing 26 specialty areas, including Medscape members and non-members. 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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