

Medscape's Ninth Annual Physician Compensation Report Shows Wider Gender Pay Gap As Administrative Burden Grows

NEW YORK, April 10, 2019 – The gender gap in physician compensation grew this past year, with male physicians earning 25% more than women (up from 18% in 2018), according to the results of the 2019 Medscape Physician Compensation Report. While the report found that women see patients an average of four hours less per week, and gravitate towards the lower paid specialties, those factors do not fully explain the pay differences.

Meanwhile, hours spent on bureaucratic tasks, which are often cited as one of the key factors in physician burnout, tripled from 2012, with nearly 75% of physicians spending 10 hours or more on paperwork and one-third spending more than 20 hours.

The Report is the most comprehensive and widely used physician salary survey in the U.S., assessing compensation, hours worked, time spent with patients, and what they find most rewarding -- and challenging -- about their jobs. More than 20,000 U.S. physicians across 30 specialties responded to the survey.

Physician salaries increased overall to an average of \$313,000 (up from \$299,999 in 2018), marking a more than 20% increase since 2015. The highest-paid physicians were orthopedists, plastic surgeons, and otolaryngologists (ranging from \$482,000 to \$461,000, respectively), while public health and preventive medicine specialists and pediatricians reported the lowest compensation, at \$209,000 and \$225,000 respectively.

For women, salaries averaged \$51,000 less per year in primary care and \$92,000 less per year in specialties. Although women often choose lower-paying specialties, i.e. pediatrics and primary care, this does not explain the pay gaps within specialties.

To view the full Medscape 2019 Physician Compensation Report, visit:

<https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2019-compensation-overview-6011286?faf=1>

“The challenges that doctors are experiencing in their professional lives are persistent and concerning,” said Leslie Kane, MA, Senior Director, Medscape Business of Medicine. “Gender disparities remain an issue, and there have been startling increases in administrative tasks. That said, the report also found that nearly all physicians are satisfied or very satisfied with their job performance, and would choose to be a physician if they did it all over again. Despite frustration and burnout, physicians work hard to do a good job, and find patient care to be the best reward.”

Additional Report Highlights

Patients Are Likely to See a Non-Physician Clinician

Half of all physicians reported employing nurse practitioners (NPs), and more than one-third (36%) have physician assistants (PAs) in their practice. Outpatient clinics most often employ NPs (66%), followed by academic (non-hospital) settings (61%) and healthcare organizations (60%). Healthcare organizations most often employ PAs (43%), followed by office-based multispecialty groups (42%) and hospitals (41%). Physicians reported that NPs and PAs make their practice more profitable.

More Physicians Plan to Stop Taking or Stop Seeing Medicare and Medicaid Patients

Although a minority, the number of physicians reporting that they plan to stop accepting new Medicare and Medicaid patients, or discontinue seeing some of their existing patients, more than doubled to 18% (from only 8% in 2018). In many cases, physicians have decided that the cost of providing care and the time spent complying with the program regulations are not worth the program reimbursement, which is typically lower than that of commercial insurance.

Physicians Earn More in Southern States

Tennessee and Georgia entered the list of the top 10 states for physician compensation this year, with six of the top 10 located in the South. Salaries in these states ranged from \$337,000 to \$322,000, with the highest in Oklahoma, Alabama and Nevada and lowest in Connecticut, Georgia and Indiana. The number of physicians in a region, percent of insured patients and the overall concentration of specialists play a role in regional compensation differences.

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Medscape Survey Methods:

The 2019 Medscape Physician Compensation Survey was completed by about 20,000 physicians representing 30 specialty areas, including Medscape members and nonmembers. 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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