

Medscape Physician Compensation Report Shows Salaries Held Steady, Despite Pandemic

Telemedicine, recovery programs and post-lockdown demand helped practices rebound

NEW YORK, April 16, 2021 – Defying predictions, physician salaries held steady in 2020, a combination of pivoting to telehealth, leveraging government programs and reducing staff to minimize the impact of office closures and restrictions on elective procedures during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the findings of the 2021 Medscape Physician Compensation Report: The Recovery Begins.

TO VIEW THE FULL REPORT VISIT: https://www.medscape.com/slideshow/2021-compensation-overview-6013761?src=comp2021_PR&faf=1

Based on responses from more than 18,000 U.S. physicians across 29 specialties, the survey – conducted October 6, 2020 to February 11, 2021 -- found that average salaries for primary care physicians held steady at \$242,000 from \$243,000 the previous year. Similarly, specialists' average salaries dropped \$2,000 to \$344,000.

About 44% of physicians reported reductions in patient volume and nearly one in four saw a decrease in hours. However, the combination of government pandemic relief programs, staff reductions, capitation plans which continued to pay physicians, and reimbursement for telemedicine visits blunted the impact. About 45% of doctors said they experienced no loss of income, but 13% reported there were months when they had no income at all.

Nearly one in four doctors reduced their hours during the pandemic, but 58% of primary care physicians and 65% of specialists said income and average hours worked per week are now at pre-pandemic levels.

Did Zoom Calls Fuel Plastic Surgeon Salary Rise?

Plastic surgeons were the highest earning physicians this past year (\$526,000), experiencing a 10% spike over the previous year. The increase may have been driven by greater demand for cosmetic procedures, as people spent more time viewing their faces in virtual meetings. Orthopedists and cardiologists followed, with compensation at \$511,000 and \$459,000 respectively.

Lowest earning physicians were those in public health and preventive medicine (\$237,000), family medicine (\$236,000), and pediatrics (\$221,000). The gender pay disparity persisted, with female primary care physicians earning 25% less than male colleagues and female specialists earning 33% less than men.

Physicians in Alabama were the highest earning in the U.S. (\$348,000), followed by those in Kentucky (\$340,000), and Oklahoma (\$338,000). The lowest paid are in Massachusetts (\$300,000), New York (\$298,000) and Minnesota (\$296,000).

The number of physicians in a region, percent of insured patients and the overall concentration of specialists play a role in regional compensation differences.

The Medscape 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.

"Physicians experienced a challenging year on numerous fronts, including weathering the volatile financial impact of lockdowns," said Leslie Kane, MA, Senior Director, Medscape Business of Medicine. "Our report shows that many were able to pivot to use telemedicine and focus on tactics that would protect their practices. COVID took a terrible emotional toll on physicians and healthcare workers, and many are still struggling financially, but our findings showed that physicians will innovate and change quickly to meet the needs of patients through extremely difficult times."

Medscape Survey Methods:

The 2021 Medscape Physician Compensation Survey was completed by 17,903 physicians representing 29 specialty areas, including Medscape members and nonmembers. Respondents were invited to respond to the online survey. The margin of error for the survey was +/- 0.85% at a 95% confidence level.

About Medscape

Medscape is the leading source of clinical news, health information, and point-of-care tools for health care professionals. Medscape offers specialists, primary care physicians, and other health professionals the most robust and integrated medical information and educational tools. Medscape Education (medscape.org) is the leading destination for continuous professional development, consisting of more than 30 specialty-focused destinations offering thousands of free C.M.E. and C.E. courses and other educational programs for physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals. Medscape is a subsidiary of WebMD Health Corp.

About WebMD Health Corp.

WebMD Health Corp., an Internet Brands Company, is the leading provider of health information services, serving patients, physicians, health care professionals, employers, and health plans through public and private online portals, mobile platforms, and health-focused publications. The WebMD Health Network includes WebMD Health, Medscape, Jobson Healthcare Information, prIME Oncology, MediQuality, Frontline, Vitals Consumer Services, Aptus Health, MedicineNet, eMedicineHealth, RxList, OnHealth, Medscape Education, and other owned WebMD sites. WebMD®, Medscape®, CME Circle®, Medpulse®, eMedicine®, MedicineNet®, theheart.org®, and RxList® are among the trademarks of WebMD Health Corp. or its subsidiaries.

Media Contact: Patricia Garrison; pgarrison@webmd.net; 212-624-3885

