

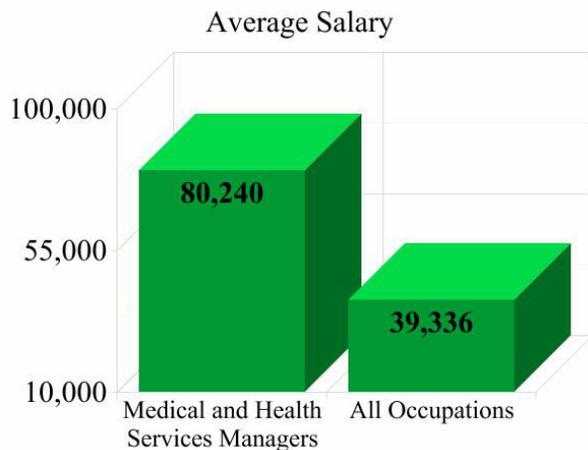
## Medical and Health Services Managers

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### WHAT THEY DO

Healthcare is a business and, like every business, it needs good management to keep the business running smoothly. Medical and health services managers, also referred to as healthcare executives or healthcare administrators, plan, direct, coordinate, and supervise the delivery of healthcare. These workers are either specialists in charge of a specific clinical department or generalists who manage an entire facility or system.

The structure and financing of healthcare are changing rapidly. Future medical and health services managers must be prepared to deal with the integration of healthcare delivery systems, technological innovations, an increasingly complex regulatory environment, restructuring of work, and an increased focus on preventive care. They will be called on to improve efficiency in healthcare facilities and the quality of the care provided.



Large facilities usually have several assistant administrators who aid the top administrator and handle daily decisions. Assistant administrators direct activities in clinical areas, such as nursing, surgery, therapy, medical records, and health information. In smaller facilities, top administrators handle more of the details of daily operations. For example, many nursing home administrators manage personnel, finances, facility operations, and admissions, while also providing resident care.

Clinical managers have training or experience in a specific clinical area and, accordingly, have more specific responsibilities than do generalists. For example, directors of physical therapy are experienced physical therapists, and most health information and medical record administrators have a bachelor's degree in health information or medical record administration. Clinical managers establish and implement policies, objectives, and procedures for their departments; evaluate personnel and work quality; develop reports and budgets; and coordinate activities with other managers.

Health information managers are responsible for the maintenance and security of all patient records. Recent regulations enacted by the Federal Government require that all healthcare providers maintain electronic patient records and that these records be secure. As a result, health information managers must keep up with current computer and software technology, as well as with legislative requirements. In addition, as patient data become more frequently used for quality management and in medical research, health information managers must ensure that databases are complete, accurate, and available only to authorized personnel.

In group medical practices, managers work closely with physicians. Whereas an office manager might handle business affairs in small medical groups, leaving policy decisions to the physicians themselves, larger groups usually employ a full-time administrator to help formulate business strategies and coordinate day-to-day business.

### EDUCATION REQUIRED

Medical and health services managers must be familiar with management principles and practices. A master's degree in health services administration, long-term care administration, health sciences, public health, public administration, or business administration is the standard credential for most generalist positions in this field. However, a bachelor's degree is adequate for some entry-level positions in smaller facilities, at the departmental level within healthcare organizations, and in health information management. Physicians' offices and some other facilities hire those with on-the-job experience instead of formal education.

Bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programs in health administration are offered by colleges; universities; and schools of public health, medicine, allied health, public administration, and business administration. In 2008, according to the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education, there were 72 schools that had accredited programs leading to the master's degree in health services administration.

For people seeking to become heads of clinical departments, a degree in the appropriate field and work experience may be sufficient early in their career. However, a master's degree in health services administration or a related field might be required to advance. For example, nursing service administrators usually are chosen from among supervisory registered nurses with administrative abilities and graduate degrees in nursing or health services administration.

Health information managers require a bachelor's degree from an accredited program. In 2008, there were 48 accredited bachelor's degree programs and 5 master's degree programs in health information management, according to the Commission on Accreditation for Health Informatics and Information Management Education.

## Medical and Health Services Managers - Continued

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### OTHER USEFUL SKILLS

Medical and health services managers often are responsible for facilities and equipment worth millions of dollars, and for hundreds of employees. To make effective decisions, they need to be open to different opinions and good at analyzing contradictory information. They must understand finance and information systems and be able to interpret data. Motivating others to implement their decisions requires strong leadership abilities. Tact, diplomacy, flexibility, and communication skills are essential because medical and health services managers spend most of their time interacting with others.

Health information managers who have a bachelor's degree or post baccalaureate degree from an approved program and who pass an exam can earn certification as a Registered Health Information Administrator from the American Health Information Management Association.

### HOW TO ADVANCE

Medical and health services managers advance by moving into more responsible and higher paying positions, such as assistant or associate administrator, department head, or chief executive officer, or by moving to larger facilities. Some experienced managers also may become consultants or professors of healthcare management.

New graduates with master's degrees in health services administration may start as department managers or as supervisory staff. The level of the starting position varies with the experience of the applicant and the size of the organization. Hospitals and other health facilities offer postgraduate residencies and fellowships, which usually are staff positions. Graduates from master's degree programs also take jobs in large medical group practices, clinics, mental health facilities, nursing care corporations, and consulting firms.

Graduates with bachelor's degrees in health administration usually begin as administrative assistants or assistant department heads in larger hospitals. They also may begin as department heads or assistant administrators in small hospitals or nursing care facilities.

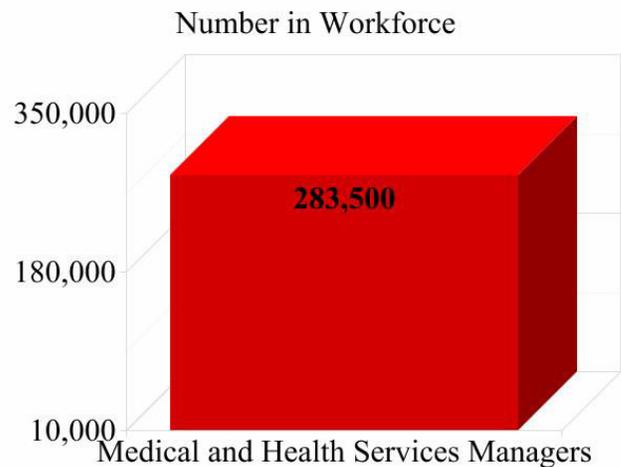
### WORK ENVIRONMENT

Some managers work in comfortable, private offices; others share space with other staff. Many medical and health services managers work long hours. Nursing care facilities and hospitals operate around the clock; administrators and managers be called at all hours to deal with problems. They also travel to attend meetings or to inspect satellite facilities.

### JOB GROWTH

Employment of medical and health services managers is expected to grow 16 percent from 2008 to 2018, faster than the average for all occupations. The healthcare industry will continue to expand and diversify, requiring managers to help ensure smooth business operations.

Managers in all settings will be needed to improve quality and efficiency of healthcare, while controlling costs, as insurance companies and Medicare demand higher levels of accountability. Managers also will be needed to oversee the computerization of patient records and to ensure their security as required by law. Additional demand for managers will stem from the need to recruit workers and increase employee retention, to comply with changing regulations, to implement new technology, and to help improve the health of their communities by emphasizing preventive care.



Hospitals will continue to employ the most medical and health services managers over the 2008–18 decade. However, the number of new jobs created is expected to increase at a slower rate in hospitals than in many other industries because of the growing use of clinics and other outpatient care sites. Despite relatively slow employment growth in hospitals, a large number of new jobs will be created because of the industry's large size.

Employment will grow fast in offices of health practitioners. Many services previously provided in hospitals will continue to shift to these settings, especially as medical technologies improve.

Medical and health services managers also will be employed by healthcare management companies that provide management services to hospitals and other organizations and to specific departments such as emergency, information management systems, managed care contract negotiations, and physician recruiting.