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Top 5 Healthcare Administration Salaries by Specialty – 6/12/2013

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June 12, 2013
By [HEALTHCAREERS.com](#)

[Healthcare administrators](#) can earn an average of \$96,030 a year according to the last survey done by the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)--that's a sweet \$46.17 an hour. This [salary](#) can rise or fall depending on specialty, and many healthcare administration job seekers might like to understand which specialties pay the best before they go [looking for a job](#).

Calculating healthcare administration salaries by specialty poses a few problems, though, because of the differing definitions of "healthcare administrators." The BLS only includes health services managers, not lower-earning medical record technicians or other administrators, under the label "healthcare administrators"--even though in many small doctors' offices these roles will overlap. This causes disparity between BLS results and private surveys: the BLS found that specialty administrators earned a yearly average of \$107,030, while another survey listed the top compensation for specialty administrators at half that, \$54,314. It's likely that the Bureau of Labor Statistics includes high-rolling hospital group [CEOs](#), since the BLS crunches *all* the census data across the country and does not exclude outliers: that might skew the employment figure upwards. The private survey done by the [Professional Association of Health Care Office Management](#) likely ran by selecting volunteers out of a pool of administrators to answer questions about their compensation. That means the PAHCOM numbers likely don't include as many of the highest bankers, and likely include more of the ordinary office managers at the individual practice level who the BLS might have grouped with "medical record technicians."

What did the [PAHCOM](#) survey find? The most recent survey in 2009 found the top 5 specialties for compensation were:

5. **\$44,910 in obstetrics and gynecology,**
4. **\$48,793 in ophthalmology,**
3. **\$58,899 in cardiology,**
2. **\$54,201 in dermatology and**
1. **\$54,314 in gastroenterology.**

The vast majority of healthcare administrators work in hospitals, not specialty practices, however, according to the [BLS](#), which means the average compensation for the ordinary healthcare administrator will differ from the PAHCOM numbers. Compensations also continue to rise over the past few years--unfortunately, both government and private surveys have failed to release easily-accessible data after 2011. Today's compensation may well be much higher: according to the BLS in 2011, healthcare administrators who specialize into specific industries rather than small practices may earn over \$100K a year. According to the BLS, the top specialty industries for healthcare administrators are:

5. **Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing,** to make \$122,690 a year. The BLS counted only 110 healthcare administrators nationwide in this industry in 2011.
4. **Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical,** and Control Instruments Manufacturing, at \$124,300 a year. This is a more specialized industry than medical equipment manufacturing, and focuses on engineering high-end measuring devices--not your typical oxygen tank or hospital bed. Only 50 healthcare administrators under the BLS definition work in this industry.
3. **Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services,** at \$136,140. Healthcare administrators in this specialty pioneer new ways to manage the data about employees and patients, so they work closely with computer programmers and software engineers and may have experience or at least exposure to those fields. While most healthcare administrators in hospitals and practices deal with data management software in some capacity during their every day routines, only these 40 professionals nationwide work directly for the data processing companies.
2. **Scientific Research and Development Services,** at \$138,800. Understandably, this specialty industry employs the most healthcare administrators out of the top 5, at 1,290 employees.
1. **Insurance and Employee Benefit Funds,** at \$139,400. These healthcare administrators specialize in working for insurance companies, sorting out benefit packages and pioneering new plans for healthcare employees. They number only 60 professionals.

In other words, in today's economy it helps to specialize. If a job applicant can find out what she's good at and hone in on that skill--whether it relates to scientific research, insurance management, or gastroenterology--she can climb to the top compensation riding on that ability. This doesn't mean there isn't a place for the "jack-of-all-trades" in healthcare administration, though: if every job applicant finds what he or she loves and sticks with it, compensation comes second to the joy of the job.

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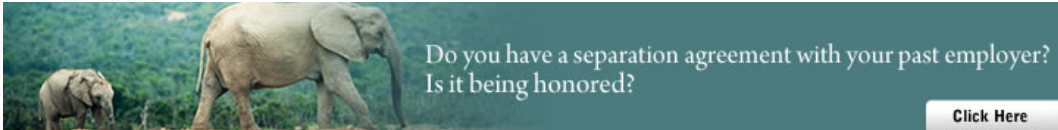
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