



**Healthcare Management:
A Career Outlook**

A CAREERBUILDER RESOURCE GUIDE



You've probably heard that healthcare is one of the few industries that tend to see perpetual growth regardless of the ups and downs of the economy. Many people immediately think, "Of course, doctors and nurses will always be needed." While that's true, the promising outlook of healthcare doesn't begin and end in the examination room.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that employment of medical and health services managers will increase 23 percent through 2022, much faster than the average for all occupations¹. While it is true that healthcare has a reputation as a perennially solid industry because of the continuing need people have for medical services, why is the demand for managers over the next decade so dramatic? Consider the leadership required to ensure medical facilities are running smoothly. Medical and health services managers ensure everything behind the scenes operates as it should so patients have a comfortable experience.

3 TRENDS DRIVING GROWTH IN HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT CAREERS

New Federal Legislation

The Affordable Care Act has begun and will continue to expand the number of Americans who have health insurance, leading people for whom cost was previously an obstacle to seek preventative services, medical care and testing. Thus, physicians' offices, hospitals and other medical facilities must prepare for the influx of new patients. Healthcare managers are needed to ensure operations run smoothly and deliver quality care in a cost-efficient manner. They also must keep on top of regulations and make certain of compliance.

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook: Human Resources Manager. [online] Available at www.bls.gov/ooH/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.htm [Accessed 23 Apr. 2014].

The Aging Population

As Baby Boomers continue to age, this large group is expected to put increasing demands on the healthcare industry and its managers. Chronic health problems may lead to more visits to the doctor, and desire for improved quality of life may result in more surgeries such as hip or knee replacements. These activities then affect rehabilitation institutes and nursing care facilities offering physical or occupational therapy and home-health organizations.

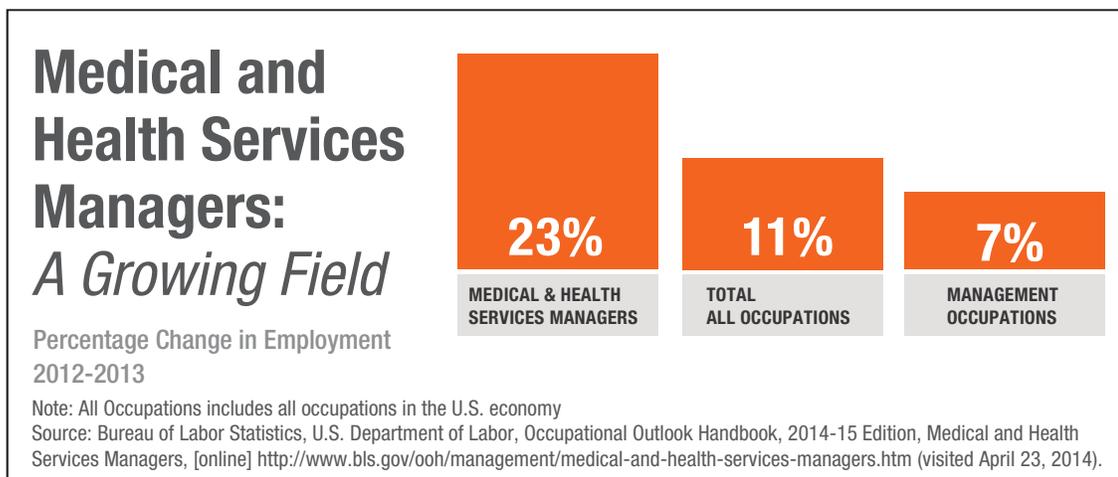
A Rise in Technology

The 21st century is an exciting, changing time for the healthcare industry. Once slow to use information technology to its full potential, an increasing number of medical establishments and practices are switching to electronic health records and more sophisticated billing systems. Similarly, medical advances are providing a wealth of options in terms of treatment and where to receive it. Institutions and medical practices depend on their administrative leaders to keep up with the times and make critical decisions that influence future success.

HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT: EMPLOYMENT AND SALARIES

Currently, 315,500 people are employed as healthcare managers, according to BLS, and this figure is expected to hit 388,800 by 2022². And while it is difficult to predict the exact salaries healthcare managers will earn in the years ahead, current statistics show that these professionals are well-rewarded for their abilities.

The median annual pay for medical and health services managers was \$88,580 in May 2012³, with the top 10 percent earning more than \$150,000. As compensation varies by the level of responsibility and the size of the facility, the trend toward larger, more complex medical group practices may translate to bigger paychecks for top managerial talent.



² U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook: Compensation and Benefits Managers. [online] Available at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/medical-and-health-services-managers.htm> [Accessed 23 Apr. 2014].

³ Ibid.



THE ROLE OF A HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT DEGREE

For most people, careers in this field begin with earning a healthcare management degree. Such programs can provide a solid foundation for the skills noted above as well as in areas such as finance, healthcare information technology, resource allocation, workforce diversity, marketing, public relations, project management, and ethical and legal issues in healthcare. Professionals interested in greater leadership roles often pursue a master's degree in healthcare management.

With the healthcare field is becoming increasingly complex, degree programs not only can prepare future administrators through teaching fundamentals but also by developing their abilities to handle new challenges.

“What I found to be the most useful skills I obtained from my healthcare management program were mastering the skill of problem solving and having a complete understanding of the overall healthcare system,” says Sadia Ibrahimi, who served as director of managed care at Stamford Hospital and regional director of provider contracting at WellPoint before becoming an independent consultant. “In our program, we had various opportunities to work on projects for hospital executives. Through these internships, I had to think outside the box and help find solutions for issues many hospitals were facing in this era of skyrocketing healthcare costs. Being able to quickly diagnose issues and find a solution has been key in my positions.”

Indeed, applicants who are ready to help address an employer's monetary concerns get attention. Martha Castillo, Chief Operating Officer of Florida-based Palm Medical Group and Hygea Holdings, notes that financial management skills are “crucial” and among the most useful “real-world” skills learned in a healthcare management degree program.

A complete perspective, however, is also important. Healthcare managers need to remember that behind the numbers are actual people giving and receiving essential services. “Someone with a strong background in both clinical and administrative is the strongest candidate,” Castillo says.

While they may not be as visible to patients as doctors and nurses, healthcare managers are vital to treatment. People who wish to make a difference in the lives of others through this profession look to have ample stimulating and rewarding prospects in the years ahead.