

Healthcare Administration



WHAT IS A HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATOR?

- Medical and health services managers, also called healthcare executives or healthcare administrators, plan, direct, and coordinate medical and health services. They might manage an entire facility, a specific clinical area or department, or a medical practice for a group of physicians. Medical and health services managers must direct changes that conform to changes in healthcare laws, regulations, and technology.
- Medical and health services managers held about 333,000 jobs in 2014. Most medical and health services managers work in offices in healthcare facilities, including hospitals and nursing homes, and group medical practices.
- Medical and health services managers typically need at least a bachelor's degree to enter the occupation. However, master's degrees are common and sometimes preferred by employers. Graduate programs often last between 2 and 3 years and may include up to 1 year of supervised administrative experience in a hospital or healthcare consulting setting.

WHY PURSUE A CAREER IN HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION?

- **Make a Difference/Social Mission:** Decisions made by healthcare executives can help improve life for hundreds, even thousands of people every day. Healthcare executives have a sense of social mission—they deeply care about the people they work with and serve.

- **Career Opportunities:** Healthcare is the largest industry in the U.S., and the second largest employer, with more than 11 million jobs. Virtually all new private sector jobs over the past 5 years came from healthcare.
- **Excellent Earning Potential:** Students of healthcare management have excellent earning potential. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, medical and health services managers earned a median annual salary of \$94,500 in 2015. Senior healthcare executives with more experience and achievements can earn \$200,000 or significantly more.
- **Career Flexibility:** In addition to more traditional careers in healthcare management, graduates work in many other areas including: pharmaceutical companies, health insurance companies, management consulting, banks and other financial institutions, long-term care facilities, professional societies and state and Federal agencies.
- **Visible and Valued Role in the Community:** Healthcare executives typically are highly respected members of their communities. Hospitals and other healthcare organizations are among the largest employers in many communities and their organizations positively impact the health of the populations they serve.

WHAT MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES MANAGERS DO

- Work to improve efficiency and quality in delivering healthcare services
- Develop departmental goals and objectives
- Ensure that the facility in which they work is up to date on and compliant with new laws and regulations

HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION

- Recruit, train, and supervise staff
- Manage the finances of the facility, such as patient fees and billing
- Prepare and monitor budgets and spending to ensure departments operate within allocated funds
- Represent the facility at investor meetings or on governing boards
- Keep and organize records of the facility's services
- Communicate with members of the medical staff and department heads

HOW TO BECOME A MEDICAL OR HEALTH SERVICES MANAGER

- **Education:** Prospective medical and health services managers typically have a degree in health administration, health management, nursing, public health administration, or business administration. Degrees that focus on both management and healthcare combine business-related courses with courses in medical terminology, hospital organization, and health information systems.
- **Work Experience in a Related Occupation:** Many employers require prospective medical and health services managers to have some work experience in either an administrative or a clinical role in a hospital or other healthcare facility. For example, nursing home administrators usually have years of experience working as a registered nurse.
- **Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations:** Requirements vary by state and by the type of management position. Some states may have educational standards, licensure exams, or continuing education requirements.

IMPORTANT QUALITIES TO HAVE IN HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION

- **Analytical skills.** Medical and health services managers must understand and follow current regulations and adapt to new laws.
- **Communication skills.** These managers must effectively communicate policies and procedures with other health professionals and ensure their staff's compliance with new laws and regulations.

- **Detail oriented.** Medical and health services managers must pay attention to detail. They might be required to organize and maintain scheduling and billing information for very large facilities, such as hospitals.
- **Interpersonal skills.** Medical and health services managers discuss staffing problems and patient information with other professionals, such as physicians and health insurance representatives.
- **Leadership skills.** These managers are often responsible for finding creative solutions to staffing or other administrative problems. They must hire, train, motivate, and lead staff.
- **Technical skills.** Medical and health services managers must stay up to date with advances in healthcare technology and data analytics. For example, they may need to use coding and classification software and electronic health record (EHR) systems as their facility adopts these technologies.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) Resources for Future Students: aupha.org/resourcecenter/futurestudents
- Healthcare Administration, Management & Policy Centralized Application Service: hampcas.org
- Find a Health Administration program: aupha.org/resourcecenter/futurestudents/find-a-program
- Health Administrator Career Profiles: healthmanagementcareers.org/careers.cfm
- Healthcare Executives Network

