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At a Glance

As healthcare reform drives consolidation, integration, and value-based reimbursement, the modern MSP’s influence spans more functions, facilities, and settings than ever before.

To meet the demands of an industry on the move, MSPs must be fierce advocates not only for the patients they protect and the practitioners they support, but also for the profession they’ve chosen. The 2016 MSP Salary Survey Special Report features unmatched insight into a wide spectrum of field experiences that MSPs can leverage to further their career goals, showcase their department’s dynamism, and improve their profession’s recognition.

Nearly 1,000 responses to the 2016 MSP Salary Survey paint the picture of a profession that’s at once niche and expansive: Almost one-third of this year’s respondents work in a facility that employs one or fewer full-time MSPs, yet survey takers span the care continuum. Geographically, the 2016 survey drew respondents from every U.S. state, plus several overseas locales (e.g., Lebanon and Egypt).

Although MSPs’ workforces trend lean, their roles are growing in scope and significance. Long-standing functions like credentialing, privileging, and data management remain among the most time-intensive for this year’s respondents, but a brand-new survey question reveals that nearly one-third are part of a department that performs both medical staff services and provider enrollment. MSPs’ work environments are likewise evolving. In another new survey focus, nearly one-third of respondents reported that their employer permits telecommuting.

The freedom to clock hours off-site isn’t the only showing of employer support. Despite widespread efforts to reduce healthcare spending, almost half of this year’s respondents work for organizations that offer tuition reimbursement, and nearly three in four can request funding for conference attendance.

Compensation on the whole is strong, if somewhat static. For the second year in a row, the largest percentage of survey takers make between $70,001 and $100,000. Beyond substantial base salaries, almost three in four of this year’s respondents have seen a raise in the past year.

While college educations and certification remain popular among 2016 respondents, certain degrees and credentials have lost ground. Almost half of survey takers possess certification from the National Association Medical Staff Services, but the percentage of those with a Certified Professional Medical Services Management credential is at a four-year low. Higher education rates have seen similar oscillation. Compared to previous years, more 2016 Salary Survey respondents hold bachelor’s degrees, but slightly fewer hold master’s degrees.

Another predictor of career advancement, longevity has also seen some subtle fluctuation. Although nearly half of this year’s respondents have been in the medical staff services field for more than 15 years, this turnout of industry veterans is the lowest in three years. In contrast, there’s a noticeable uptick in newcomers, who are likelier than their more seasoned counterparts to hold a four-year college degree. Given the profession’s growing rigor, MSPs hoping to stay competitive must sharpen and diversify their skill sets through ongoing professional development activities, according to Special Report contributors.

The 2016 MSP Salary Survey Special Report reflects a profession that’s in high demand and well on the way to reforming reductive viewpoints that once undermined career growth. To maintain this trajectory, MSPs must relentlessly energize their peers across the profession and demonstrate their value to outside stakeholders. This report provides statistics and strategies to advance these endeavors.

“I have deeply valued the training and expertise of our MSPs. High-quality MSPs doing their job well translates to quality care for our patients and lower malpractice risk for the organization.”

—Kathleen Kelly, MD, ABIHM, FACP
How to Use This Report

The 2016 MSP Salary Survey Special Report contains three major sections, 10 special features, upwards of 50 statistical visualizations, and thousands of words devoted to expert-driven analysis and guidance. By publishing all this information, the Credentialing Resource Center team hopes to empower MSPs across career stages, the compensation spectrum, and the care continuum with insights and inspiration to advance their career goals. The following are tips for leveraging key findings in the field.

Jump around

Unless you’re the one MSP with time to spare, a front-to-back read-through of the Special Report is probably not the best course of action. With your hectic schedule in mind, we’ve designed this resource for skimming and skipping around. Contents are shaped into a number of sections, figures, and features that reflect the experiences of MSPs across a diverse and evolving profession and quickly connect readers with the focus areas that matter most to their career.

Wondering whether a higher degree may put you on track for a raise or a move to a new setting? Turn to p. 56 for a look at professional trends among respondents with similar educational backgrounds. Are you the sole MSP on staff? Flip to p. 40 for an overview of work scopes, challenges, and opportunities among the 29.2% of respondents who go it alone. Eager to advance the compensation conversation with salary setters in your facility? Turn to p. 8 for pointers on establishing fair pay grades.

To locate the report findings most relevant to your career, consult the table of contents, which provides an outline of all major sections, special features, and figures. And throughout the report, look for text prefaced with an arrow (▶) symbol, which points to additional information on key subjects.

See how you stack up

Use the report’s special features to gauge whether your experiences are on par with similarly situated peers and what it may take to kick your career into high gear:

- **In-depth profiles** close each section, providing a window into the ranks of this year’s highest- and lowest-paid respondents, MSPs in one-person departments, and those with professional certification.

- **“Practical applications”** features provide prescriptive guidance on advancing common career goals.

- **“Perspectives”** sidebars highlight industry voices and explore indicators of a changing profession. While aggregate statistics show the sweep of key industry trends, direct quotes from survey takers provide deeper insight into how and why MSPs and their employers are embracing—or bucking—emerging focuses, including telecommuting and provider enrollment.

Identify, refocus, or advance professional goals

Study the Special Report’s dozens of statistical breakdowns—including multiple takes on salary, education, certification, and tenure—to discern viable avenues for career advancement.

Plus, harness the wealth of expert strategy to improve department workflows, invigorate professional development pursuits, engage colleagues across disciplines, and advance broader advocacy efforts. Covered action items include standardizing roles and responsibilities, capturing MSP performance metrics, and building career ladders.

Make the case for additional resources or compensation

The tremendous evolution of the medical staff services profession over the past four decades, coupled with a historic paucity of occupational data, can complicate the creation of appropriate pay grades for MSPs.

Leverage Special Report findings, analysis, and strategies in petitions for higher pay, better benefits, or additional department resources. Use the variety of salary breakdowns and incisive expert analysis to conduct meaningful research on relevant payment trends and to educate key stakeholders (e.g., executive and HR leadership) on compensation standards for MSPs.

“The people who responded to the survey should take a close look at the survey and talk to their managers and leadership in the organization about why their jobs are so important and ask for fair compensation,” says Kathleen Kelly, MD, ABIHM, FACP, chief clinical integration officer at SwedishAmerican, a division of UW Health in Rockford, Illinois.

‘Keep fighting the good fight’

Over the years, medical staff services has evolved from a clerical field into a multifaceted career path, but this rapid growth doesn’t preempt the occasional flare-up of an outdated attitude. One key to improving public understanding and gaining deserved recognition? Ongoing advocacy.

“I would encourage MSPs to keep advocating for themselves in terms of salary, in terms of job description, in terms of job title,” says Barbara Warstler, MBA, CPMSM, director of medical staff services and credentialing at University Hospitals in Cleveland.

The Special Report, which distills the perspectives of MSPs from all walks, can lend credence to professional advocacy on any scale. Cite a survey finding or two in on-the-fly collegial exchanges, integrate a larger sampling into formal appeals for funding, or draw on the trials and triumphs of respondents in coordinated efforts to foster professionwide progress.

“It’s an uphill battle, and in the organizations that I’ve been in, luckily, leadership has been receptive, and they do see the value of services that we bring to the organization,” says Warstler. “You have to keep fighting the good fight.”

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