2008 Survey of Primary Care Physicians

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2008 SURVEY OF PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE, PRACTICE CHARACTERISTICS, CAREER PLANS

INTRODUCTION

Merritt Hawkins & Associates® is a national healthcare staffing firm specializing in the recruitment of physicians in all medical specialties as well as select allied healthcare professionals. Established in 1987, Merritt Hawkins & Associates is a division of AMN Healthcare, the largest healthcare staffing company in the United States and the largest provider in all four of its business lines: travel nurse staffing, locum tenens staffing, physician permanent placement services and allied healthcare professional staffing.

Periodically, Merritt Hawkins & Associates conducts surveys of physicians and other healthcare professionals, focusing on issues relating to compensation, career satisfaction and related matters.

This report summarizes our third annual survey of primary care physicians, defined as family physicians, general internal medicine practitioners and pediatricians. The goal of the survey is to track the financial performance of primary care practices and to learn more about the practice plans of primary care physicians.

The survey was conducted for ***Physicians Practice*****,** a leading national medical practice management publication with a readership of more than 270,000 physicians, most of them in primary care.

METHODOLOGY

Merritt Hawkins & Associates mailed the survey to 10,000 primary care physicians selected at random from a national physician database. Four thousand surveys were mailed to family practitioners, 4,000 to general internal medicine practitioners and 2,000 to pediatricians. The survey was mailed in May 2008, and 312 completed surveys were received by June 24, 2008. Respondents had the option of taking the survey anonymously or of providing their names and addresses. Responses to the 2008 survey are provided below, along with comparisons to responses from previous years, where applicable. Note that questions asked in 2008 varied from those asked in 2006 and 2007, so comparisons in some cases are not possible.

NUMBER OF SURVEYS MAILED PER MEDICAL SPECIALTY

Family Practice:	4,000
General Internal Medicine:	4,000
Pediatrics:	2,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF SURVEYS MAILED: 10,000

SURVEYS RECEIVED BY SPECIALTY:

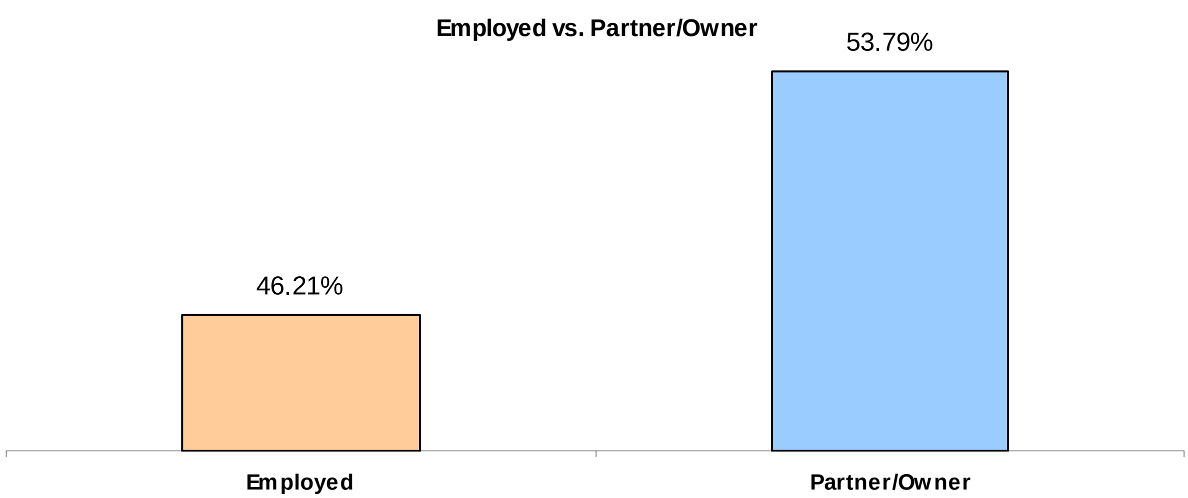
Specialty	2006	2007	2008
Family Practice	45.6%	44.1%	43.1%
General Internal Medicine	28.2%	32.4%	31.2%
Pediatrics	23.5%	23.5%	23.8%
Other	0.8%	0.0%	1.8%
N/A	1.8%	0%	0%

ABOUT 2008 RESPONDERS:

TOTAL MALE RESPONSE = 59.21% **TOTAL FEMALE RESPONSE = 40.79%**

	35 or Younger			36 – 45 Yrs.		
Specialty	Male	Female	Did Not Respond	Male	Female	Did Not Respond
Family Practice	46.67%	40.00%	13.33%	51.35%	45.95%	2.70%
Internal Medicine	40.00%	60.00%	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%
Pediatrics	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%	23.53%	58.82%	17.65%
AVG%	***33.06%***	***62.50%***	***4.44%***	***47.18%***	***46.04%***	***6.78%***

	46 – 55 Yrs.			56 or Older		
Specialty	Male	Female	Did Not Respond	Male	Female	Did Not Respond
Family Practice	50.00%	28.13%	21.88%	75.00%	16.67%	8.33%
Internal Medicine	41.46%	26.83%	31.71%	73.33%	13.33%	13.33%
Pediatrics	37.50%	45.83%	16.67%	64.29%	21.43%	14.29%
AVG%	***42.99%***	***33.60%***	***23.42%***	***70.87%***	***17.14%***	***11.98%***



About your practice:

1. How many years have you been in medical practice?

Specialty	0 – 5 Yrs. 2006	0 – 5 Yrs. 2007	0 – 5 Yrs. 2008	6 – 10 Yrs. 2006	6 – 10 Yrs. 2007	6 – 10 Yrs. 2008	11 – 15 Yrs. 2006	11 – 15 Yrs. 2007	11 – 15 Yrs. 2008
Family Practice	11.10%	17.20%	16.96%	22.20%	19.90%	25.00%	17.00%	21.90%	12.50%
Internal Medicine	15.80%	8.10%	9.88%	21.60%	21.20%	18.52%	16.50%	21.20%	11.11%
Pediatrics	13.80%	18.50%	15.63%	20.70%	17.30%	10.94%	15.50%	19.70%	12.50%
AVG %	***13.57%***	***14.60%***	***14.16%***	***21.50%***	***19.47%***	***18.15%***	***16.33%***	***20.93%***	***12.04%***

Specialty	16 – 20 Yrs. 2006	16 – 20 Yrs. 2007	16 – 20 Yrs. 2008	21+ Yrs. 2006	21+ Yrs. 2007	21+ Yrs. 2008
Family Practice	21.30%	18.50%	13.39%	28.40%	22.50%	32.14%
Internal Medicine	20.10%	21.20%	24.69%	26.00%	28.30%	35.80%
Pediatrics	15.50%	17.30%	9.38%	33.60%	27.20%	51.56%
AVG %	***18.97%***	***19.00%***	***15.82%***	***29.33%***	***26.00%***	***39.83%***

2. How many years have you been in your CURRENT practice?

Specialty	0 – 5 Yrs.	6 – 10 Yrs.	11 – 15 Yrs.	16 – 20 Yrs.	21 Yrs. or More
Family Practice	36.84%	26.32%	10.53%	7.89%	18.42%
Internal Medicine	33.73%	20.48%	10.84%	15.66%	19.28%
Pediatrics	31.25%	10.94%	18.75%	9.38%	29.69%
AVG %	***33.94%***	***19.25%***	***13.37%***	***10.98%***	***22.46%***

3. What type of practice are you in?

Specialty	Solo	Group of 2 – 9 Physicians	Group of 10 – 19 Physicians	Group of 20 or More Physicians
Family Practice	19.13%	57.39%	6.09%	17.39%
Internal Medicine	27.38%	41.67%	10.71%	20.24%
Pediatrics	23.81%	53.97%	12.70%	9.52%
AVG %	***23.44%***	***51.01%***	***9.83%***	***15.72%***

4. Which of the following best describes your current practice? "I am:"

	Too Busy			Not Busy Enough			As Busy as I Want		
Specialty	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Family Practice	29.80%	36.70%	24.32%	12.00%	16.70%	9.01%	58.20%	46.60%	66.67%
Internal Medicine	31.70%	38.10%	40.48%	13.70%	13.30%	3.57%	53.20%	48.60%	55.95%
Pediatrics	24.10%	25.90%	26.56%	14.70%	22.20%	28.13%	61.20%	51.90%	45.31%
AVG %	***28.53%***	***33.57%***	***30.45%***	***13.47%***	***17.40%***	***13.57%***	***57.53%***	***49.03%***	***55.98%***

5. On average, how many hours do you work each week?

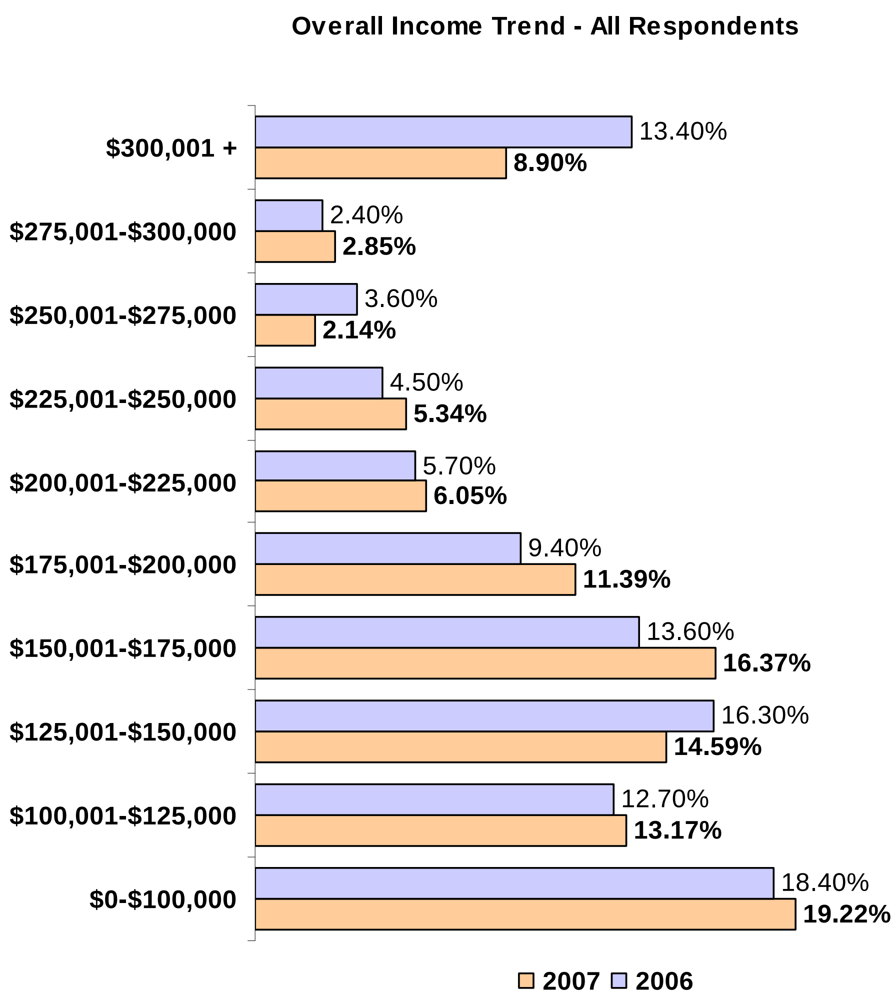
Specialty	1 – 15 Hours	16 – 30 Hours	31 – 40 Hours	41 – 60 Hours	61 – 74 Hours	75 Hours or More
Family Practice	0.00%	8.77%	15.79%	61.40%	11.40%	2.63%
Internal Medicine	1.22%	2.44%	21.95%	46.34%	19.51%	8.54%
Pediatrics	0.00%	14.52%	38.71%	40.32%	6.45%	0.00%
AVG %	***0.41%***	***8.58%***	***25.48%***	***49.36%***	***12.46%***	***3.72%***

ABOUT INCOME:

6. Which of the following best describes net income from your practice?

	Excellent			Appropriate			Disappointing		
Specialty	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Family Practice	10.20%	9.40%	9.48%	39.60%	31.30%	48.28%	49.30%	59.30%	42.24%
Internal Medicine	8.60%	4.40%	7.50%	30.20%	28.30%	36.25%	61.20%	67.30%	56.25%
Pediatrics	12.10%	13.40%	7.94%	36.20%	41.50%	49.21%	51.70%	45.10%	42.86%
AVG %	***10.30%***	***9.07%***	***8.31%***	***35.33%***	***33.70%***	***44.58%***	***54.07%***	***57.23%***	***47.12%***

7. Including cash bonuses and other monetary incentives, but not including non-cash extras (such as a health plan), how much did you earn last year? (2007)

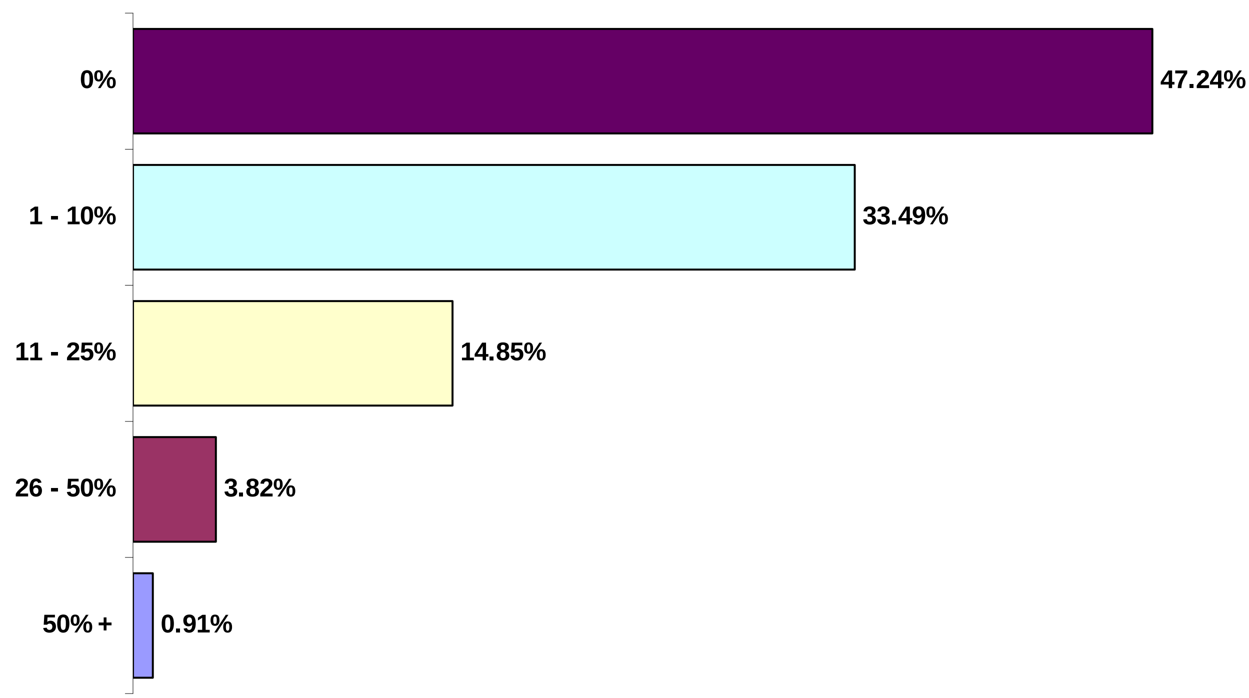


2005/06/07 Income Trends by Specialty

	Family Practice			Internal Medicine			Pediatrics		
Income Range	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
$0-$100,000	14.70%	18.20%	20.72%	15.80%	13.30%	14.46%	17.20%	25.60%	24.19%
$100,001-$125,000	18.20%	13.50%	12.61%	18.70%	11.40%	12.05%	17.20%	12.80%	14.52%
$125,001-$150,000	16.40%	18.90%	15.32%	14.40%	20.00%	14.46%	12.10%	6.40%	16.13%
$150,001-$175,000	14.20%	14.20%	14.41%	10.10%	17.10%	19.28%	7.80%	7.70%	11.29%
$175,001-$200,000	8.40%	8.10%	10.81%	11.50%	11.40%	13.25%	7.80%	8.80%	11.29%
$200,001-$225,000	6.20%	2.70%	7.21%	5.80%	4.80%	2.41%	3.40%	12.80%	8.06%
$225,001-$250,000	4.00%	4.20%	6.31%	2.20%	4.80%	3.61%	6.00%	5.20%	4.84%
$250,001-$275,000	1.80%	4.70%	1.80%	2.20%	1.90%	3.61%	3.40%	3.80%	1.61%
$275,001-$300,000	2.70%	4.70%	3.60%	4.30%	0.00%	3.61%	6.90%	1.40%	1.61%
$300,001 or more	6.70%	10.80%	7.21%	9.40%	15.30%	13.25%	14.70%	15.50%	6.45%
N/A	6.70%	0.00%	0.00%	5.60%	0.00%	0.00%	3.40%	0.00%	0.00%

8. Of the above amount, what percentage was drawn from bonuses and other monetary incentives that you received in ADDITION TO your regular salary/income?

Overall Income Drawn from Bonuses - All Respondents



Percent of Income Drawn from Bonuses by Specialty (2007)

(Includes bonuses and other monetary incentives in addition to regular income)

Income Range	Family Practice % Drawn from Bonuses and Other Monetary Incentives			
	0%	1 - 10%	11 - 25%	26 - 50%
$0-$100,000	60.87%	30.43%	0.00%	8.70%
$100,001-$125,000	69.23%	30.77%	0.00%	0.00%
$125,001-$150,000	47.06%	29.41%	23.53%	0.00%
$150,001-$175,000	38.89%	38.89%	11.11%	11.11%
$175,001-$200,000	41.67%	25.00%	25.00%	8.33%
$200,001-$225,000	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$225,001-$250,000	42.86%	57.14%	0.00%	0.00%
$250,001-$275,000	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
$275,001-$300,000	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%
$300,001 or more	25.00%	37.50%	12.50%	25.00%
AVG%	**45.06%**	**34.91%**	**14.71%**	**5.31%**

Income Range	Pediatrics % Drawn from Bonuses and Other Monetary Incentives			
	0%	1 - 10%	11 - 25%	26 - 50%
$0-$100,000	93.33%	6.67%	0.00%	0.00%
$100,001-$125,000	55.56%	44.44%	0.00%	0.00%
$125,001-$150,000	40.00%	40.00%	20.00%	0.00%
$150,001-$175,000	71.43%	28.57%	0.00%	0.00%
$175,001-$200,000	57.14%	28.57%	14.29%	0.00%
$200,001-$225,000	60.00%	20.00%	20.00%	0.00%
$225,001-$250,000	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%
$250,001-$275,000	100.0%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$275,001-$300,000	0.00%	100.0%	0.00%	0.00%
$300,001 or more	25.00%	0.00%	50.00%	25.00%
AVG%	**50.25%**	**33.49%**	**13.76%**	**2.50%**

Income Range	Internal Medicine % Drawn from Bonuses and Other Monetary Incentives				
	0%	1 - 10%	11 - 25%	26 - 50%	50% +
$0-$100,000	91.67%	8.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$100,001-$125,000	55.56%	11.11%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
$125,001-$150,000	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$150,001-$175,000	53.33%	13.33%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
$175,001-$200,000	27.27%	36.36%	27.27%	9.09%	0.00%
$200,001-$225,000	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$225,001-$250,000	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$250,001-$275,000	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
$275,001-$300,000	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
$300,001 or more	36.36%	18.18%	0.00%	27.27%	18.18%
AVG%	**46.42%**	**32.06%**	**16.06%**	**3.64%**	**1.82%**

9. What other incentives complete your total compensation package? *(All 2008 respondents)*

Retirement Plan	Profit Sharing	Regular Bonus Program	Other	Stock Options
43.79%	22.77%	21.72%	10.34%	1.38%

10. Are you currently supplementing your income with anything outside the general scope of primary care? *(All 2008 respondents)*

None	Diagnostic Testing	Minor Surgical Procedures	Selling Health Products
85.82%	8.96%	3.36%	1.87%

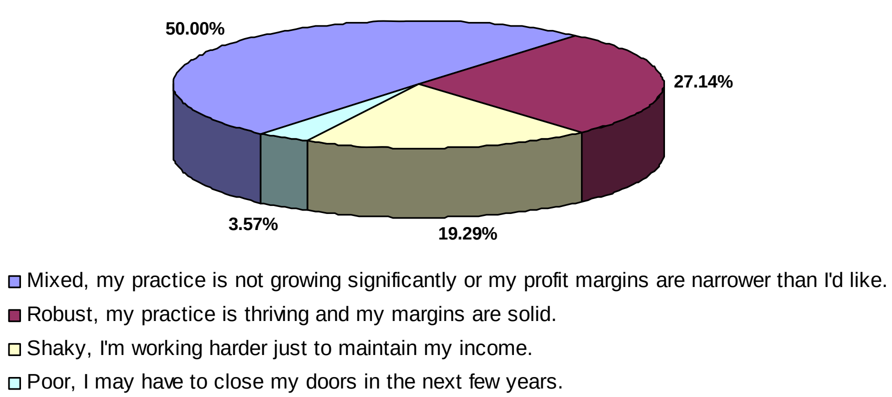
11. What does overhead in your practice currently run as a percent of net medical revenue?

Overhead Range	Family Practice % of Net Medical Revenue		
	2006	2007	2008
1 - 10%	4.00%	6.30%	1.85%
11 - 20%	3.60%	2.40%	1.85%
21 - 30%	4.40%	3.10%	5.56%
31 - 40%	5.30%	9.40%	5.56%
41 - 50%	16.00%	14.20%	18.52%
51 - 60%	25.30%	25.20%	35.19%
61 - 70%	20.90%	23.60%	20.37%
71 - 80%	2.70%	7.90%	7.41%
81 - 90%	0.00%	1.60%	1.85%
91 - 100%	1.30%	3.90%	1.85%
101% or More	1.80%	2.40%	0.00%
NA	14.70%	0.00%	0.00%

Overhead Range	Internal Medicine % of Net Medical Revenue		
	2006	2007	2008
1 - 10%	3.60%	4.30%	2.17%
11 - 20%	2.20%	3.20%	8.70%
21 - 30%	5.00%	5.40%	6.52%
31 - 40%	13.70%	11.80%	10.87%
41 - 50%	20.90%	17.20%	23.91%
51 - 60%	23.00%	29.00%	19.57%
61 - 70%	14.40%	23.70%	13.04%
71 - 80%	5.80%	0.00%	8.70%
81 - 90%	0.00%	1.10%	2.17%
91 - 100%	1.40%	3.20%	4.35%
101% or More	70.00%	1.10%	0.00%
NA	9.30%	0.00%	0.00%

Overhead Range	Pediatrics % of Net Medical Revenue		
	2006	2007	2008
1 - 10%	1.70%	6.90%	0.00%
11 - 20%	1.70%	5.60%	0.00%
21 - 30%	4.30%	1.40%	3.23%
31 - 40%	8.60%	5.60%	22.58%
41 - 50%	14.70%	18.10%	22.58%
51 - 60%	25.00%	29.20%	25.81%
61 - 70%	16.40%	20.80%	16.13%
71 - 80%	5.20%	6.80%	9.68%
81 - 90%	3.40%	1.40%	0.00%
91 - 100%	2.60%	4.20%	0.00%
101% or More	1.70%	0.00%	0.00%
NA	14.70%	0.00%	0.00%

12. Describe the financial viability of your practice over the next one to three years.



THE JOB MARKET AND CAREER SATISFACTION:

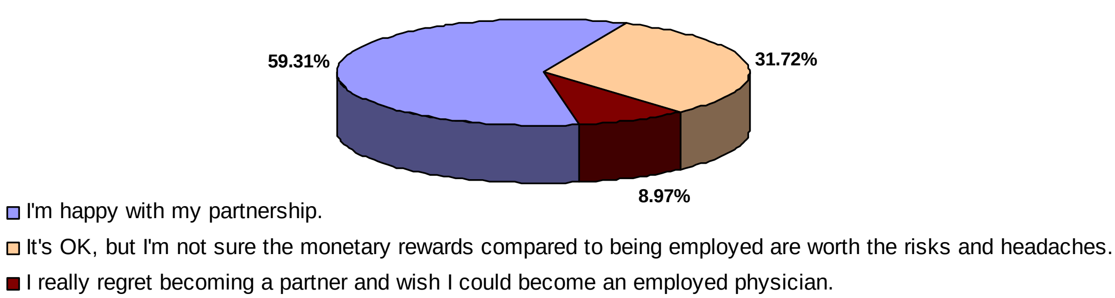
13. Approximately how many times are you contacted by physician recruiters per month? *(including all recruitment letters, phone calls and email contacts)*

Number of Contacts	All 2008 Respondents		
	Family Practice	**Internal Medicine**	**Pediatrics**
0	12.28%	9.64%	4.84%
1 - 5	37.72%	40.96%	62.90%
6 - 10	19.30%	27.71%	16.13%
11 - 15	15.79%	2.41%	12.90%
16 - 20	6.14%	8.43%	0.00%
21 - 25	2.63%	8.43%	3.23%
26 or More	6.14%	2.41%	0.00%

14. In the next five years, I plan to:

Specialty	Continue as I am	Radically Change Operations Model	Close	Join a Larger Group	Be Acquired by a Hospital	Start My Own Practice
Family Practice	73.58%	9.43%	9.43%	4.72%	1.89%	0.94%
Internal Medicine	69.14%	9.88%	3.70%	6.17%	6.17%	4.94%
Pediatrics	87.50%	3.57%	3.57%	3.57%	0.00%	1.79%
AVG %	***76.74%***	***7.63%***	***5.57%***	***4.82%***	***2.69%***	***2.56%***

15. How do you feel about being a partner in your practice?



16. Which best describes your attitude toward pay-for-performance in primary care?

Specialty	A Good Idea Whose Time Has Come	A Good Idea but Performance Standards Data Are Lacking	A Poor Idea: Performance Is Too Hard to Quantify	Unfamiliar with Pay-for-Performance
Family Practice	11.65%	35.92%	41.75%	10.68%
Internal Medicine	5.19%	37.66%	48.05%	9.09%
Pediatrics	5.17%	48.28%	24.14%	22.41%
AVG %	***7.34%***	***40.62%***	***37.98%***	***14.06%***

TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS:

What is the financial viability of primary care practice today? What are the general earning levels of primary care physicians and what are primary care doctors doing to supplement their incomes? What types of overhead are primary physicians seeing in their practices? Given current practice conditions, are primary care physicians planning on making any changes to their practice styles? How busy are primary care physicians and how often are they being recruited?

Merritt Hawkins & Associates conducts the **Survey of Primary Care Physicians** in order to provide answers to these and related questions. The survey is conducted on behalf of ***Physicians Practice,*** a national medical practice management publication with a readership of more than 270,000 physicians, the majority of whom are in primary care.

As a national physician search firm, Merritt Hawkins & Associates has seen a dramatic shift in the position of primary care physicians in the medical marketplace. Throughout most of the 1990s, primary care physicians were in acute demand as healthcare organizations nationwide sought the "gatekeepers" who were seen as essential to implementing managed care. During this period, primary care physicians were viewed as "blue chip players," and more than 75 percent of the physician search assignments Merritt Hawkins & Associates conducted were for primary care doctors.

When the gatekeeper system failed to take hold, the recruiting paradigm changed dramatically. Revenue-driving specialists became the focus of most healthcare organizations' recruiting efforts, and by 2004 more than 75 percent of Merritt Hawkins & Associates' recruiting assignments were for non-primary care specialists. The apparently fading focus on primary care led to speculation among health policy experts and among physicians themselves that primary care was becoming a largely irrelevant practice style. The role of primary care physicians, some believed, was being absorbed by allied health professionals at the low end of the continuum of care and by medical specialists at the high end.

However, our recent experience as recruiters contradicts this speculation. Demand for primary care physicians among our clients is rising rapidly, as the chart below indicates.

Merritt Hawkins & Associates' Primary Care Search Assignments (Tracked from April 1 of current year to March 31 of the subsequent year)				
2003/04	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**2006/07**	**2007/08**
341	**402**	**572**	**639**	**878**

For the last two years, family physicians and general internists topped the list of medical specialists in greatest demand by our clients. Clearly, primary care has made a comeback.

Demand for primary care physicians, however, has not necessarily led to robust practice conditions for all primary care doctors. The 2008 Survey of Primary Care Physicians provides some indication of how primary care doctors are doing financially, how they feel about the financial performance of their practices and what changes they plan to make in their practices, if any.

WHO RESPONDED?

Approximately 40 percent of primary care physicians who responded to the survey are female. This response reflects the growing number of women entering medicine and the fact that many female physicians choose to practice primary care. While 25 percent of all physicians are female, 30 percent of all primary care physicians are female, according to the American Medical Association. The ranks of younger primary doctors in particular are dominated by women, which is reflected in the survey respondents. Of respondents 35 or younger, 62.5 percent are female. Of respondents 56 or older, 70.87 percent are male, two numbers which clearly reflect where primary care is headed.

The majority (53.79 percent) of respondents are partners or owners of their practices, while the remaining 46.21 percent are employed by medical groups, hospitals or other organizations. Respondents are almost evenly split between those who have been in practice for 10 years or less (53.19 percent) and those who have been in practice for 11 years or more (46.81 percent). Close to half of respondents (43.1 percent) are family practitioners, about one-third (31.2 percent) are general internists and about one-quarter (23.8 percent) are pediatricians.

HOW BUSY?

Physicians were asked to indicate how busy they are in their practices. The majority (86 percent) said they are either “too busy” or “as busy as I want to be,” while the remainder (14 percent) said they are “not busy enough.” Fewer said they are “not busy enough” than said so last year, and fewer than last year said they are “too busy.” However, in the three years we have conducted the survey, there have been only minor variations in response to this question. Each year, more pediatricians have indicated that they are “not busy enough” than have family physicians or general internists. In 2008, 28.13 percent of pediatricians said they are "not busy enough,” compared to just 3.57 percent of internists and 8.6 percent of family physicians. Based on survey responses, general internists appear to be busier than family physicians and pediatricians. This may be due in part to the increase in the population of older patients who typically turn to internists for their primary care.

More than one-third of primary care physicians surveyed (34 percent) are working 40 hours per week or less. This may be attributed to the fact that many respondents are women and that female physicians work fewer hours on average than do male physicians.

How Much?

More than half of physicians surveyed (56 percent) indicated they earned between $100,000 and $200,000 in net income in 2007, including salary, all cash bonuses and other monetary incentives. About one-fifth (19.22 percent) said they made $100,000 or less in 2007, while a quarter (25.28 percent) indicated they made $200,000 or more.

Close to half (47.24 percent) did not draw any of their net income from bonuses or other monetary incentives that were in addition to their regular salaries. Only about 5 percent drew more than 25 percent of their total income from bonuses or other incentives beyond their regular salaries. Less than 20 percent drew more than 10 percent of their income from bonuses or other monetary incentives in addition to their regular salaries.

The majority of physicians surveyed (85.82 percent) are not supplementing their income with anything outside of the general scope of primary care. Of those who are, close to 9 percent are performing diagnostic testing, a few (3.36 percent) are performing minor surgical procedures, and an even smaller number (1.37 percent) are selling health products in their practices.

Physicians indicated that they receive a variety of incentives in addition to regular income and monetary bonuses. Close to 44 percent have a retirement plan as part of their total compensation package, while approximately 22 percent have a profit sharing plan and a regular bonus plan. A small number (1.38 percent) receive stock options.

The majority of family physicians surveyed (85.19 percent) indicated that current overhead in their practices as a percent of income runs at 41 percent or greater. More than 71 percent of general internists surveyed indicated that overhead in their practices currently runs at 41 percent or greater, while 74 percent of pediatricians indicated the same.

Physicians were asked to consider the financial viability of their practices over the next one to three years. About 73 percent said that the financial viability of their practices over the next three years is either “mixed,” “shaky” or “poor,” while the remaining 27 percent said their practices are “robust.”

In Demand?

Physicians were asked about how actively they are being recruited. The majority (at least 87 percent) indicated they hear from recruiters at least once a month. About 31 percent of family practitioners said they hear from recruiters at least 11 times per month, compared to only about 16 percent of pediatricians who indicated the same. Both family physicians and internists appear to be recruited more intensely than pediatricians.

Physicians also were asked about their future plans. The majority of physicians surveyed (76.74 percent) indicated that they will continue to practice as they are over the next five years. Pediatricians seem the most committed to their current practice style. More than

87 percent of pediatricians indicated they will make no major changes to their practices over the next five years, compared to 69 percent of internists and 73.58 percent of family physicians. About a quarter of physicians indicated they will make some significant change in their practices over the next five years, either by radically changing their operations model, closing their practices, joining a larger group, being acquired by a hospital or starting their own practices.

Those physicians who are partners or owners in their practices were asked how they feel about being a practice partner. The majority (59.31 percent) said they are happy with being a partner. Close to one-third, however, said that while being a partner is okay, the monetary rewards may not be worth the risk. An additional 8.97 percent said they “really regret” becoming a partner and wish to become employed. These numbers reflect Merritt Hawkins & Associates’ recent experience with physician candidates, many of whom are expressing a preference for employed positions.

Physicians also were asked about their attitude toward pay-for-performance, in which doctors are financially rewarded for achieving positive outcomes and high patient satisfaction scores. A minority of those surveyed (7.34 percent) endorsed the concept fully, while 40.62 percent indicated it is a good idea but data is lacking to implement it. Forty percent of those surveyed indicated that “P-4-P” is a bad idea because it is difficult to quantify the performance of primary care physicians. Slightly more than 14 percent of physicians surveyed said they are not familiar with P-4-P.

CONCLUSION

Fewer physicians surveyed in 2008 indicated they are disappointed with their incomes than did so in 2007 and 2006, which may indicate that high demand for primary care services has had at least some positive effects on physician income. In addition, about three-quarters of physicians surveyed indicated that they plan to continue practicing as they are over the next five years, suggesting that their practices are at least sustainable over that period of time. The survey suggests that primary care physicians are in considerable demand and that the great majority hear from recruiters at least 12 times a year, while some hear from recruiters considerably more often. With the exception of pediatricians, the great majority of primary care doctors surveyed indicated that they are either too busy or as busy as they want to be.

Despite this, however, the survey indicates that incomes for primary care physicians were flat over the last year while overhead was up. Only 27 percent of physicians indicated that their practices are robust financially, while almost a quarter indicated that the financial position of their practices is either shaky or poor.

The survey, therefore, paints an ambivalent picture of primary care in which physicians are both busy and in demand but are nevertheless not always able to realize robust practices due to flat incomes and high overhead.

ADDITIONAL SURVEYS

Merritt Hawkins & Associates is a division of AMN Healthcare, the nation's largest healthcare staffing firm. Other surveys conducted by Merritt Hawkins & Associates or other AMN brands include:

- Survey of Physicians 50 to 65 Years Old
- Physician Inpatient / Outpatient Revenue Survey
- Survey of Final Year Medical Residents
- Survey of Primary Care Physicians
- Review of Temporary Health Care Staffing Trends & Incentives
- Review of Temporary Health Care Staffing Trends & Incentives (Mid-level Providers)
- Survey of Hospital Chief Nursing Officers
- Survey of Male Nurses
- Survey of Travel Nurses
- Survey of Nurse Students

For additional information about this survey or other information generated by Merritt Hawkins & Associates, please contact:

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