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## **REPORT: FAMILY PHYSICIANS, PSYCHIATRISTS, TOP LIST OF MOST IN DEMAND DOCTORS**

### **Large and Small Communities Seeing Physician Shortages**

**DALLAS, June 5, 2017** – For the 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, family doctors top the list of the most highly recruited physicians in the United States, followed by psychiatrists, according to an [annual report](#) tracking physician compensation and recruiting trends.

Prepared by Merritt Hawkins, the nation’s leading physician search firm and a company of AMN Healthcare, the *2017 Review of Physician and Advanced Practitioner Recruiting Incentives* tracks the 3,287 physician and advanced practitioner recruiting assignments the firm conducted from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. Now in its 24th year, the report indicates that Merritt Hawkins conducted more search assignments for family doctors in the 12 months covered by the report than for any other type of physician, followed by psychiatrists, internists, obstetrician/gynecologists, and hospitalists.

“Emerging delivery models that reward quality and population health are driving demand for family doctors,” said Travis Singleton, senior vice president of Merritt Hawkins. “Consumer preference for urgent care centers, retail clinics, community health centers, telehealth and other modes of convenient care is another key factor accelerating the recruitment of family doctors.”

The report shows that demand for family physicians is exerting upward pressure on starting salaries. The average starting salary for family physicians is \$231,000, according to the 2017 report, up from \$198,000 in 2015, an increase of 17%. The average starting salary for psychiatrists, who also are in great demand, is \$263,000, according to the report, up from \$226,000 two years ago, while the average starting salary for general internists is \$257,000, up from \$207,000 two years ago.

### **Psychiatrist Shortage Deepens**

The 2017 report indicates that Merritt Hawkins conducted more searches for psychiatrists in the last year than it has in any previous 12 months in the firm’s 30 year history. This coincides with a [study in the May, 2016 issue of Health Affairs](#) indicating that for the first time more money is spent treating mental health disorders in the U.S. than any other malady, including heart disease, trauma, and cancer. In addition, a March, 2017 [report from the National Council of Behavioral Health \(NCBH\)](#) indicates that a national

shortage of psychiatrists is about to spiral out of control, with 77% of U.S. counties reporting a severe psychiatrist shortage.

“Psychiatrists, particularly those willing to work in inpatient settings, are becoming next to impossible to find, and mental health is increasingly handled by other types of clinicians,” said Singleton.

### **Use of Value-Based Incentives Increasing**

Merritt Hawkins’ 2017 report suggests that the use of value-based physician incentives is gaining momentum. Of those Merritt Hawkins clients offering physicians a production bonus last year, 39% based the bonus in whole or in part on value-based metrics such as patient satisfaction and outcome measures, compared to 32% the previous year and 23% the year before that. However, the 2017 report indicates that less than 5% of total physician compensation is tied to quality or value-based metrics, suggesting that volume remains the primary method for measuring and rewarding physician productivity.

### **Big Cities See Big Demand**

The 2017 report indicates that 55% of Merritt Hawkins’ recruiting assignments took place in cities of 100,000 or more people last year, the highest percent of searches taking place in large cities since Merritt Hawkins began tracking this number. According to Singleton, this suggests that physician shortages are not confined to traditionally underserved rural areas but have spread to large metro centers with a comparatively high ratio of physicians-per-population.

### **About Merritt Hawkins**

Merritt Hawkins is the largest physician search and consulting firm in the United States and is a company of AMN Healthcare (NYSE: AMN). More information about Merritt Hawkins and AMN Healthcare can be accessed at [www.merritthawkins.com](http://www.merritthawkins.com).

### **About AMN Healthcare**

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