

The Development of Profession of Health Services Management in the United States

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Abstract: Health services managers are responsible for management and financing of health care in a variety of delivery models. This article provides information about the profession of health services management. It includes a brief historical overview of the profession, describes the various job roles that health service managers can assume, and outlines the educational curriculum to prepare and qualify for a career as health services manager. Educational preparation is available at the baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral levels. Finally, the article discusses future prospects for employment in the profession.

Key words: health service management; profession; education

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[摘要] 健康服务经理用不同的方式负责为卫生保健机构筹措资金, 并管理其运作。本文介绍健康服务管理业的相关信息, 包括职业发展简史、健康服务经理人的职业角色, 以及为获得职业资格所应接受的教育科目。相关科目可以通过攻读学士、硕士以及博士学位获得。文中还讨论了行业的就业前景。

[关键词] 健康服务管理; 职业; 教育

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1 Introduction

The term *health services manager* describes individuals who plan, direct, coordinate, and supervise the delivery of health care. These managers include generalist, who manage an entire facility or groups of services, and specialists, who are in charge of specific department and services that require specific technical knowledge of the service.

For instance, at East Carolina University, the Health Services Management (HSM) program resides in the Department of Health Services and Information Management in the School of Allied Health Sciences. It prepares competent entry level health services managers for a variety of positions in health care settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, rehabilitation centers, physician office practices, and insurance companies. A secondary purpose of the program is to provide a health management curriculum for students contemplating graduate study in rehabilitation serves such as physician therapy, occupational therapy, and physician assistant studies. Additionally, healthcare professionals with an associates degree and currently credentialed in an allied health discipline can earn a baccalaureate degree in HSM as a full or part-time student.

Formal training of health service managers began in the 1930s when the first graduate programs offered certificates and master degrees in hospital administration as the U.S. hospital industry realized the need for business training of their managers who were faced with complex issues such as facility governance,

service planning, financing, and personnel management. Since the 1960s, baccalaureate programs in health administration began to prepare individuals for entry-level position in healthcare management^[1].

2 Occupational Description

Health services managers must be prepared to deal with evolving integrated health care delivery systems, technological innovations, an increasingly complex regulatory environment, restructuring of work, and an increased focus on preventive care. They will be called on to improve efficiency in health care facilities and the quality of the health care provided. Increasingly, health services managers will work in organizations in which they must optimize efficiency of a variety of related services. Large facilities usually have several assistant administrators to aid the top administrator and to handle daily decisions. Assistant administrators may direct activities in clinical areas such as nursing, surgery, therapy, medical records, or health information. In smaller facilities, top administrators handle more of the details of daily operations. For example, many nursing home administrators manage personnel, finances, facility operations, and admissions and also have a larger role in resident care.

Clinical managers have training or experience in a specific clinical area and, accordingly, have more specific responsibilities than do generalists. For example, directors of physical therapy are experienced physical therapists, and most health information and medical record administrators have a bachelor's degree in health information or medical record administration. Clinical managers establish and implement policies, objectives, and procedures for their departments; evaluate personnel and work; develop reports and budgets; and coordinate activities with other managers.

In physician practices, managers work closely with physicians. Whereas an office manager might handle business affairs in small medical groups, leaving policy decisions to the physi-

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cians themselves, larger groups usually employ a full-time administrator to help formulate business strategies and coordinate day-to-day business^[2].

3 Job Descriptions

Medical and health services managers held about 248000 jobs in 2004. About 30 % worked in private hospitals, and another 16 % worked in offices of physicians or in nursing care facilities. The remainder worked mostly in home health care services, Federal Government health care facilities, ambulatory facilities run by State and local governments, outpatient care centers, insurance carriers, and community care facilities for the elderly. The following job titles are appropriate in any health-care provider setting:

Administrator	Director
Associate Administrator	Executive Director
Assistant Administrator	Manager
Chief Executive Officer	President
Chief Finance Officer	Superintendent
Chief Operating Officer	Vice President
Department Director	

3.1 Employment Characteristics Health service managers bring knowledge and experience unique to the operating of health care facilities and services. These include the ability to:

① Work with a diverse work groups such as physicians, rehabilitation professions, and other allied health professions. ② Understand and manage national and state medical services payment systems such as Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance plans such as Blue Cross Blue Shield and proprietary insurance companies. ③ Comply with national, state, and local governments regulations on the provision of health services. ④ Plan health services necessary to meet the needs of the populations served by the facility. ⑤ Report and be accountable to governing boards, advisory boards, community organizations. ⑥ Report and be accountable to multiple levels of executive management.

Compensation for health service managers varies by level of experience and responsibility, type of facility, geographical location, and education levels. Earnings vary in a wide range from \$ 35000 to over \$ 200000 per annum with higher salaries earned by executive of large hospital and health care systems. Health service managers with a bachelor's degree and little experience can expect compensation between \$ 25000 and \$ 50000^[1].

Median annual earnings of medical and health services managers were \$ 67430 in May 2004. The middle 50 % earned between \$ 52530 and \$ 88210. The lowest 10 % earned less than \$ 41450, and the highest 10 % earned more than \$ 117990. According to the U.S. Department of Labor^[2] median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of medical and health services managers in May 2004 were as follows:

Federal Government	\$ 87200
General medical and surgical hospitals	\$ 71280
Offices of physicians	\$ 61320
Nursing care facilities	\$ 60940
Home health care services	\$ 60320

The Medical Group Management Association reported that, in 2004, median salaries for administrators were \$ 72875 in practices with 6 or fewer physicians, \$ 95766 in practices with 7 to 25 physicians, and \$ 132955 in practices with 26 or more physicians^[2].

Median annual compensation in 2004 for hospital adminis-

trators of selected clinical departments was \$ 76800 in respiratory care, \$ 81100 in physical therapy, \$ 87700 in home health care, \$ 88800 in laboratory services, \$ 90200 in long-term care, \$ 93500 in medical imaging/diagnostic radiology, \$ 94400 in rehabilitation services, \$ 95200 in cancer treatment facilities, \$ 96200 in cardiology, \$ 102800 in nursing services, and \$ 113200 in pharmacies^[3]. Salaries also varied according to size of facility and geographic region.

According to a survey by the Professional Association of Health Care Office Management, total 2004 median compensation for office managers in specialty physicians' practices was \$ 72047 in gastroenterology, \$ 66946 in dermatology, \$ 66207 in cardiology, \$ 64543 in ophthalmology, \$ 63801 in obstetrics and gynecology, \$ 62545 in orthopedics, \$ 58595 in pediatrics, \$ 52211 in internal medicine, \$ 50924 in psychiatry, and \$ 50049 in family practice^[2].

3.2 How Health Service Managers Benefit the Lay Public It is the responsibility health service managers to insure that the public is receiving state of the art healthcare services that are effective, efficient, and provided by competent practitioners who are properly trained and licensed according to a myriad of regulatory bodies. Additionally, health service managers are responsible for surveying the health care needs of the communities they service and make adjustments in their service offerings to meet the healthcare needs of the community.

4 Educational Programs: Academic Curriculum and Training

Health services managers must be familiar with management principles and practices. A master's degree in health services administration, long-term care administration, health sciences, public health, public administration, or business administration is the standard credential for most generalist positions in this field. However, a bachelor's degree is adequate for some entry-level positions in smaller facilities, at the departmental level within health care organizations, and in health information management. Physicians' offices and some other facilities may substitute on-the-job experience for formal education.

Bachelors, masters, and doctoral degree programs in health administration are offered by colleges; universities; and schools of public health, medicine, allied health, public administration, and business administration. In 2005, 70 schools had accredited programs leading to the master's degree in health services administration, according to the Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education.

For persons seeking to become heads of clinical departments, a degree in the appropriate field and work experience may be sufficient early in their career. However, a master's degree in health services administration or a related field might be required to advance. For example, nursing service administrators usually are chosen from among supervisory registered nurses with administrative abilities and graduate degrees in nursing or health services administration^[2].

Some graduate programs seek students with undergraduate degrees in business or health administration; however, many graduate programs prefer students with a liberal arts or health profession background. Candidates with previous work experience in health care also may have an advantage. Competition for entry into these programs is keen, and applicants need above-average grades to gain admission. Graduate programs usually last between 2 and 3 years. They may include up to 1 year of supervised administrative experience and coursework in areas such as hospital organization and management, marketing, accounting and budgeting, human resources administration, stra-

tegic planning, law and ethics, biostatistics or epidemiology, health economics, and health information systems. Some programs allow students to specialize in one type of facility: hospitals, nursing care facilities, mental health facilities, or medical groups. Other programs encourage a generalist approach to health administration education^[2].

New graduates with master's degrees in health services administration may start as department managers or as staff. The level of the starting position varies with the experience of the applicant and the size of the organization. Hospitals and other health facilities offer postgraduate residencies and fellowships, which usually are staff positions. Graduates from master's degree programs also take jobs in large medical group practices, clinics, mental health facilities, nursing care corporations, and consulting firms^[2].

Graduates with bachelor's degrees in health administration usually begin as administrative assistants or assistant department heads in larger hospitals. They also may begin as department heads or assistant administrators in small hospitals or nursing care facilities^[2].

5 Health Services Management Program at East Carolina University

5.1 Length Health services management educational programs vary in the length of time it takes to complete the prerequisite, cognate and core courses to qualify for graduation. The health services management program at East Carolina University offers a full time curriculum that can be completed in approximately 2 years after fulfilling the university required foundation courses and health services management prerequisite courses. A part time curriculum is also available for those that elect to complete the program in 3 years.

5.2 Prerequisites A minimum 2.5 GPA (grade point average) is required for admission to the professional phase (junior and senior levels) of the health services management curriculum. Prerequisite, core and cognate courses required for full acceptance in the health services management program include: College Algebra; General Biology; Human Physiology and Anatomy; Principles of Microeconomics recommended; Medical Terminology for Health Professionals; Professional Roles and Environments in Health Care; Introduction to Computers; Biostatistics or an equivalent statistics course.

5.3 Curriculum Students in the health services management program receive instruction in Applied Medical Sciences; Health Care Delivery Systems; Quality Management in Health Care; Biomedical Research Support; Health Care Payment Systems; Professional Ethical Codes and Law in Health Care; Written Communication and Documentation in Health Care; Interpersonal Team Skills for Health Care Supervisors and Practitioners; Leadership in Health Care; Health Information Management; Personnel Management and Supervision in Health Care; and Health Care Finance and Accounting. There are elective courses in Long Term Care, Managed Care, Physician Practice Management, and Health Policy.

In addition to the didactic courses one administrative internship and a final capstone exam is required. Courses are offered both face-to-face and on-line to meet the learning needs for students accepted in the program.

5.4 Licensure, Certification, and Registration Health services management has no specific licensure, certification, or registration requirements as a profession. However there are state licensure requirements for nursing home administrators, and licensure, certification, and registration requirements for clinical

directors where required by law. Health services managers can receive several certifications by national professional organizations such as the following:

Hospitals and Health Care Organizations

ACHE- American College of Healthcare Executives

<http://www.ache.org>

Nursing Homes and other Long Term Care

ACHCA- American College of Health Care Administrators

tors

<http://www.achca.org>

Physician Practice Management

ACMPE- American College of Medical Practice Executives

tives

<http://www.mgma.org/acmpe/index.cfm>

Financial Management

HFMA- Healthcare Financial Management Association

<http://www.hfma.org>

5.5 Collaboration between the Health Services Management Program and Other Departments of the University

Faculty in the health services management program provide courses and lectures on healthcare financial management and reimbursement to other department of the School of Allied Health Sciences including Clinical Laboratory Sciences undergraduates and graduate students in Physician Assistant Studies. Additionally the Department of Health Services and Information Management provides healthcare management courses to graduate student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program in the School of Business and the Master of Public Administration (MPA) in the Department of Political Science. There is also a health care certificate program for those with baccalaureate degrees who desire additional course work in health services management without enrolling in a graduate degree program.

5.6 Employment Outlook Employment of health services managers is expected to grow faster than average for all occupations through 2014, as the health care industry continues to expand and diversify. Job opportunities will be especially good in offices of health practitioners, general medical and surgical hospitals, home health care services, and outpatient centers. Applicants with work experience in the health care field and strong business and management skills should have the best opportunities^[2].

Employment will grow fastest in practitioners' offices and in home health care agencies. Many services previously provided in hospitals will continue to shift to these sectors, especially as medical technologies improve. Demand in medical group practice management will grow as medical group practices become larger and more complex. Hospitals will continue to employ the most medical and health services managers during the 10 years ending 2014. However, the number of new jobs created is expected to increase at a slower rate in hospitals than in many other industries because of the growing utilization of clinics and other outpatient care sites^[2].

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