

Health Care Administrator

■ Job Description

Health care administrators plan, organize, and coordinate health care delivery. They manage facilities, services, programs, staff, budgets, and relations with other organizations.

Hospitals usually have three levels of health care administrative responsibility. Executive administrators are concerned with planning, policymaking, community outreach, negotiations, and response to federal regulations and standards. Associate or assistant administrators are responsible for budgeting, personnel, inservice education, information management, and coordination of hospital departments. Other administrators specialize in financial management, marketing, systems analysis, planning, and labor relations.

The administrative staffs of nursing homes and home health agencies usually are smaller than those of hospitals. These administrators may have only one or two assistants, sometimes none; however, they apply the same management skills used by the administrators of larger facilities. The administrators of health maintenance organizations (HMOs) have the added responsibility of developing medical benefit programs for enrolled members.

■ Job Settings

More than one third of all health care administrators work in hospitals. Others work in nursing homes, home health agencies, HMOs, clinics, rehabilitation centers, psychiatric and ambulatory care facilities, and doctors' and dentists' offices.

■ Projected Needs

Employment of health care administrators is expected to grow faster than average in both the nation and the state through 2010. The population is both growing and aging. As the population grows, the number of people receiving medical care and the number of medical offices will increase. In addition, elderly people are more likely than younger people to need medical care. Thus much of the growth for this occupation will be at hospitals and nursing homes. Managers with previous work experience or

education in the health care field and those with keen business skills will be in greatest demand.

There were 8,920 people employed in this medium-sized occupation in Illinois in 2000.

■ Salaries

Earnings of health care administrators vary by type and size of the facility, as well as by level of responsibility.

Nationally, the median wage for health care administrators is \$28.47 per hour. Half of all health care administrators earn between \$22.36 and \$36.92 per hour.

In Illinois, the median hourly wage is \$30.07. Wages in selected cities are given below:

| City | Median Hourly Wage |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Bloomington-Normal | \$27.32 |
| Champaign-Urbana | \$27.57 |
| Chicago | \$33.24 |
| Decatur | \$22.29 |
| Kankakee | \$24.23 |
| Moline-Rock Island | \$25.57 |
| Peoria-Pekin | \$30.27 |
| Rockford | \$24.82 |
| Springfield | \$24.84 |
| St. Louis | \$27.54 |

Benefits usually include vacations, health insurance, and a retirement plan. Some administrators receive free meals and housing. Others receive bonuses based on job performance.

■ Related Careers

Health care administrators have training or experience in both health and management. Other occupations requiring knowledge in both fields are public health directors, social welfare administrators, directors of voluntary health agencies and health professional associations, and underwriters in health insurance companies.

■ Differences in Training

Educational requirements vary with the size and nature of the facility and the responsibilities involved. Most positions require a master's degree in health

services administration, long term care administration, public health, or business administration. For some generalist positions, employers seek applicants with clinical experience (as nurses or therapists, for example) as well as academic preparation in business or health services administration. A bachelor's degree is adequate for some entry-level positions in smaller operations. There are bachelor's and master's degree programs in health services administration in several Illinois colleges and universities.

■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/>. You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.

[Health Services Administration](#)
[Healthcare Administration, General](#)
[Nursing Administration](#)

■ Credentials

Nursing home administrators must be licensed by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. Applicants for licensure must meet education requirements, and pass a written exam. Licenses must be renewed every two years and requires the completion of 36 hours of continuing education.

■ Advanced Training

Postgraduate residencies and fellowships are available. They frequently lead to employment.

■ Resources

American College of Healthcare Executives
1 N. Franklin Street, Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60606-4425
Phone: 312.424.2800
Fax: 312.424.0023
E-mail: ache@ache.org
<http://www.ache.org>

While there is no financial aid available to undergraduates from this organization, scholarships of \$3,500 each are available to Student Associates of ACHE in their final year in a health care management graduate program. The awards are based on economic need.

Association of University Programs in Health Administration
730 11 Street NW, 4th Floor
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202.638.1448
Fax: 202.638.3429
E-mail: aupha@aupha.org
<http://www.aupha.org>

Although there is no undergraduate financial aid available from the AUPHA, second-year students in accredited health administration graduate programs are eligible for scholarships of \$5,000 each.

Medical Group Management Association
104 Inverness Terrace East
Englewood, CO 80112-5306
Phone: 303.799.1111
Fax: 303.643.4439
<http://www.mgma.com>

Through the American College of Medical Practice Executives, the MGMA offers approximately 10 different scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,500 to students enrolled in a degree course relevant to medical practice management.

American College of Health Care Administrators
300 N. Lee Street, Suite 301
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703.739.7900
Fax: 703.739.7901
<http://www.achca.org>

A \$1,500 scholarship is available for a director of nursing services with at least two years of experience in a long-term care facility.