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## Many career opportunities in health care management

By **M.B. OWENS**  
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If you want a career that is typically stable in good times or bad, take a look at health care management. And the employment possibilities in the industry are projected to increase significantly during the next 10 years due to both population growth and the aging of baby boomers.

Most people think of doctors, nurses or specialized technicians when considering health care employment. But these professions are supported by a multitude of health care managers that have good job security and income.

Health care manager jobs can be quite diverse. They can be found in nursing homes, hospitals, large medical related corporations, clinics, outpatient surgical centers, eye surgery centers, pharmaceutical establishments, insurance companies, specialized technical groups, drug companies and corporations that cater to these employers.

Job functions are also diverse. They are found in the various management areas of the industry. This extensive network of managers is found in strategic planning, facility operations and layout, human resources, financial management, accounting, fund raising, purchasing, billing, forecasting (financial, equipment needs, etc.), public relations, general supervising and many other fields.

Most all of the health-related organizations have corporate structures. The larger organizations can be some of the largest corporations in the United States and in some cases are multinational in scope.

The top management professions include company presidents, administrators, CEOs, COOs, ExVPs and CFOs. Starting in the lower ranks can lead to these top jobs with career progression. In many cases, people in jobs outside of health care are successful in transferring (within their field of expertise) to the management positions.

Since health care management requires personnel with a wide range of expertise, people from outside the industry have a good chance of finding employment in the sector.

There are specialized undergraduate degrees in health care management for people interested in the field. However, to have a good chance at being promoted to the top positions usually requires graduate level education.

The most common degrees for the fast track include Master of Business Administration or Master of Health Service Administration. The health service administration degrees often include on-the-job experience in a health care facility. People with other undergraduate degrees combined with graduate health care degrees are often in demand and have successful careers.

Health care managers should have the ability to understand and work with a number of different disciplines including doctors, nurses, technical specialists and pharmacists. They should also be prepared to work with and communicate effectively with drug companies, health care equipment companies, and the public.

In many healthcare occupations, licenses and certifications are mandatory and must be maintained throughout careers. With few exceptions, health care managers do not have to be licensed or certified (not including managers of nursing and similar positions related to patient care).

Income for managers in the industry is quite varied by field, organizational size and geographic location. The U.S. Department of Labor shows median salaries of service managers to be about \$68,000. The head of a large organization can expect to earn well over \$100,000 and the head of the largest can earn considerably more and be eligible for stock and stock options. Department head managers normally earn between \$70,000 and \$85,000. Department heads in high-demand fields can earn over \$100,000.

Today's health organizations that deal directly with patient care and insurance are involved with holding down escalating costs. These institutions seek managers with the ability to understand business, profit and loss and multiple operational functions in

various fields. Employees within the right field and with the proper training and experience will remain in high demand. This is an industry sector that will change with technical advancements, offer new opportunities, but will never go away.

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