Philadelphia, PA April 30, 2004 – The average hospitalist today sees more than 2,200 hospitalized patients per year and receives a total annual compensation package (salary and bonus) of $155,000 per year, according to the newly released 2004 Hospitalist Productivity and Compensation Survey conducted by the Society of Hospital Medicine. The survey is being hailed as the most comprehensive data collection survey defining the field of hospital medicine to date.

Hospital medicine is the nation's fastest-growing medical specialty. Hospitalists are physicians whose primary professional focus is the general medical care of hospitalized patients. There are approximately 8,000 hospitalists nationwide with the number expected to grow to 30,000 by the end of the decade. Hospitalist activities include patient care, research, teaching and leadership related to hospital care.

The survey data was collected from 300 hospital medicine group leaders and administrators representing 2,131 hospitalists across the nation. The data was gathered from September through November 2003 through voluntary, unaudited surveys administered by ADF Research of San Rafael, California.*

According to Laurence D. Wellikson, M.D., executive director for the Society of Hospital Medicine, the 2004 Compensation and Productivity Survey was commissioned "to gain an accurate picture of the work habits, employment models, productivity and payment methods of hospitalists in the U.S." The findings were released last week at the Society of Hospital Medicine's Annual Meeting held April 20-22 in New Orleans.

Among the key findings were:
Hospitalists are providing care for a significant number of hospitalized patients annually. The median number of annual patient encounters by a hospitalist is 2,236, but this number varies by type of program and region of the country. These findings are significant as hospital administrators and physician groups around the country attempt to determine the appropriate staffing levels for new and existing hospital medicine programs. The number of annual patient encounters for hospitalists is increasing because demands on primary care physicians require them to spend more time at their offices and less time rounding at hospitals.

Total compensation for hospitalists compares favorably with that of other medical specialties. The median total compensation for a hospitalist is $155,000, although this varies depending on the environment in which the hospitalist works. Hospitalists working for multi-state hospitalist-only groups have a median compensation of over $169,000 while academic hospitalists have a median compensation of $135,000. Hospitalists’ compensation packages compare favorably with those of other specialties, including emergency medicine and neurology.

Hospitalists focus on inpatient care almost exclusively. Fully 85 percent of hospitalists do not perform any outpatient care services. The median number of inpatient hours worked by a hospitalist is 1,985. For adult medicine hospitalists it is 2,111; for pediatric hospitalists it is 1,700; and for non-physician hospitalists it is 1,900. Of hospitalists who provide non-patient care services, the median number of non-patient care hours is 50 per year.

The number of patient encounters per year varies according to compensation and employment models. On average, hospitalists reported 2,238 patient encounters per year. However, hospitalists who are compensated based on a 100 percent productivity model have 3,000 encounters compared to 1,800 for hospitalists compensated based on a 100 percent salary model. The number of patient encounters per year is significantly higher for hospitalists employed by local hospitalist-only groups (2,500) and multi-state hospitals only (3,878).

There are a variety of compensation models used by hospital medicine programs. A compensation mix of straight salary, productivity bonus and incentives is the most popular compensation method for hospitalists (applies to 47 percent of surveyed hospitalists). Forty-one percent of hospitalists receive a compensation based on salary only, and 12 percent are compensated through a model of 100 percent productivity and incentives.

There are four basic models for hospital medicine programs: hospitalists employed by hospitals, multi-specialty groups, medical schools (academic programs) and hospitalist-only groups. Currently 34 percent of hospitalists are employed by hospitals or hospital corporations. About 25 percent of hospitalists are employed by hospitalist-only groups. Of those, 16 percent are local groups and 9 percent are multi-state groups. Academic hospital medicine programs are the third-largest employer of hospitalists, and multi-specialty groups employ 16 percent of hospitalists.
"This survey provides some of the most robust and reliable data ever compiled on hospitalists and serves as an excellent benchmark for future studies as the field grows," added Dr. Wellikson. "As the field of hospital medicine continues to grow, a variety of metrics and norms are evolving to characterize hospitalists, the environments in which they are employed, the work that they perform and the way in which they are paid. This data should prove valuable to hospitalists, medical groups and other organizations that implement or interact with hospital medicine programs and will help us further develop programs and address issues of concern for hospitalists in the nation."

The Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) is the premier national medical society representing hospitalists. Formerly known as the National Association of Inpatient Physicians (NAIP), SHM provides leadership in all hospitalist activities. For more information, visit SHM at www.hospitalmedicine.com.

* Unaudited data. Since some data cohorts are relatively small, especially when multiple variables are combined, it is important not to use this data as a national or regional standard.

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