



HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATOR JOBS AND HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Health care has become an industry behemoth employing hundreds of thousands physicians, nurses, health specialists, and other non-health workers and wielding considerable clout on the New York Stock Exchange. Health care administrators run the behemoth. They coordinate and organize the delivery of health care and assist in the management of health facilities. Executive level administrators are highly educated individuals responsible for the overall policy directions of the facility. They assess the need for services, equipment and personnel and also make recommendations regarding the expansion or curtailment of services, and the establishment of new or auxiliary facilities. They also oversee compliance with government agencies and regulations. Their overall duties tend to vary with the size and operations of the health facility with which they are employed. Generally, smaller facilities have less staff support so administrators are left with larger work loads. In larger facilities, administrators can delegate duties to assistants and are free to devote more time to policy directives.

Assistants to administrators at large facilities typically provide support in the execution of top-level decisions. Depending on their expertise and experience, some assistants oversee the activities of clinical departments such as nursing or surgery, or they may direct the operations of non-health areas such as personnel, finance and public relations. At nursing homes, home health agencies, and other smaller facilities, the duties and responsibilities of administrators are vast and varied. Administrators wear multiple hats in departments such as human resources, finance and operations, and admissions.

Clinical managers are health specialists who supervise specific clinical services in the health care industry. They have job-specific training and are involved with implementing policies and procedures for their departments, while coordinating their activities with other managers. Policy decisions do not fall within the purview of managers for small group practices, but larger groups usually retain the services of a full-time administrator who not only coordinates activities on a day-to-day basis but also develops and implements business strategies.

Paying Your Dues

To land plum jobs in the health care industry, entrants must be prepared to complete graduate studies. A bachelor's degree will only open doors at the entry level to the industry, and if you are lucky you might be able to work your way up to a top level position in a small operation or middle management positions at larger facilities. But a master's degree in hospital or nursing administration, public health, public or business administration, and other related fields is usually a requirement for executive office. Courses in accounting and budgeting, management principles, hospital organization and management, health economics, and health information systems provide the student with a solid foundation. Applicants to the field must be willing to work their way up the corporate health ladder, as even new graduates with master's degrees often start out as assistant administrators or managers of non-health departments. Distinct leadership qualities, effective communication and analytical skills, and the ability to motivate others will greatly enhance employment opportunities. Specializing in one type of health facility--HMOs, mental health hospitals, nursing homes, general hospitals or outpatient care services--expands the possibility of easy placement in the industry.

Associated Careers

Health care administrators can apply their training in health and management as underwriters for health insurance companies and HMOs and in sales, marketing and distribution of health equipment and supplies. Some become directors of public health, social welfare administrators, and directors of health agencies. An administrator with a Ph.D. might consult, teach, or do research.

Past And Future

As health services continue to expand and diversify, so will job opportunities. Driving this growth is a rapidly aging population with a growing 75-years-and-older segment who will require the continued services of health care professionals. Employment in home health care and nursing homes will also rise sharply as the number of elderly rises.

As HMOs and other health care providers expand operations, competition for executive-level positions within these organizations will be keen.

Quality of Life

Two Years Out

With two years' experience the health care administrator is still making his way up the corporate ladder to the job of choice. Depending on educational level and the size and operations of the facility, the applicant is either in an entry-level position or a middle-management job. Two-year health care administrators have already developed mentorships and prepare themselves for higher office by asking for and taking on more duties and responsibilities; keeping abreast of changes, trends and development in the industry; and executing their prescribed duties exceptionally well.

Five Years Out

Five years into the business, the professional is ready to be promoted to executive. She has studiously learned the ins and outs of the profession, has kept abreast of industry trends, has completed refresher courses, and has obtained necessary licenses and certificates. This is the ideal time for the young professional to evaluate his career choice, progress, and advancement potential, as well as review employment options. Returning to school to pursue higher studies is a possibility.

Ten Years Out

The experienced health care administrator is firmly entrenched in the executive suite. Pursuing post-graduate studies while still holding on to that middle-management job will significantly enhance the professional's advancement potential. With a Ph.D. the administrator can enter academia to teach and do research, or start up private consulting services.

Professional Profile

# of people in profession	31,000
% male:	65
% female:	35
average hours per week:	45

Professionals Read

Health Managers Update
Health Care Management Review
Modern Healthcare
Clinical Administrator

Books, Films and TV Shows Featuring the Profession

The Doctor
Molloy's Revenge
The Hospital

Major Employers

Bakersfield Memorial Hospital 420 44th Street Bakersfield, CA 93301 Tel: 800-528-7345 Fax: 805-327-3247 Contact: Human Resources Department	Aurelia Osborn Fox Memorial Hospital Nursing Home 1 Norton Avenue Oneonta, NY 13820 Tel: 607-431-5940 Fax: 607-431-5006 Contact: Human Resources Department	Home Nursing Company, Inc. P.O. Box 669 Lebanon, VA 24266 Tel: 800-344-2628 Fax: 540-889-0403
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You'll Have Contact With

Benefits Managers

Hospital Administrators

Insurance Agents

Physicians

Major Associations

American College of Health Care Administrators Association of University Programs in Health Administration

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Tel: 703-549-5822

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