Health Care Administration Encyclopedia Article

Health Care Administration

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Health Care Administration

Health care administration, also called health services administration, is the planning, organizing, and coordinating of the delivery of health care. Health care administrators help all types of health care organizations effectively deliver health care. They are responsible for facilities, services, programs, staff, budgets, and relations with other organizations.

Health care administrators can work in a variety of settings. More than half of all health care administrators work in hospitals. In the hospital setting, they work in executive management, day-to-day management, or specialized departments such as finance, systems analysis, or marketing. Health maintenance organizations and other managed care organizations are another major employer of health care administrators. Health care administrators in HMOs or other managed care organizations perform the same functions as administrators in large medical practices, and also establish and manage medical benefits packages that will attract enrollees and help the organization succeed.

Health care administrators also work in **nursing homes**, hospices, **home health care** agencies, **rehabilitation** centers, community mental health centers, urgent care centers, diagnostic imaging centers, and in offices of doctors, dentists, and other health care practitioners.

As the United States health care system continues to expand and diversify, the demand for skilled health care administrators is expected to grow through the year 2006. Although hospitals will continue to employ the majority of health care administrators, other types of organizations (long term care facilities, home health care agencies, and doctors' offices and clinics) will begin to use more health care administrators.

Most health care administrators have at least a bachelor's degree in a field such as finance, public administration, or personnel administration. Many also have a graduate degree in health services administration, nursing administration, or business administration, as well as work experience in a health care setting. Larger organizations generally require more specialized education than smaller ones do. Most health care administrators do not need to be licensed. Nursing home administrators in most states and the District of Columbia, however, must have a bachelor's degree, pass a licensing examination, finish a state training program, and enroll in continuing education.