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LBA Survey Reveals Trends over the Past Decade in Northeast Florida Healthcare Practice Salaries and Benefits

Increased Mergers, Evolved Business Models Illustrate Changing Healthcare Provider Landscape in Northeast Florida

Jacksonville, FL – LBA Healthcare Consulting Services, LLC, a division of The LBA Group, has conducted its sixth semi-annual Salary & Benefits Survey for clinical and administrative positions within physician practices in Northeast Florida. This year's survey has been compared to the surveys conducted during the past decade, providing a snapshot of the trends and changes in the Northeast Florida healthcare provider landscape between 2000-2010.

The trend comparison illustrated that 32 percent less of the physician practices located in Northeast Florida have more than one location, with 74 percent of responding practices having more than one location in 2000 compared to 42 percent in 2010. In concurrence with that trend is the increase in practices with two to five physicians per practice, increasing from 33 percent in 2000 to 49 percent of practices reported as having two to five physicians in 2010.

“Strategic mergers have been on the rise during the past 10 years, as they can significantly benefit a healthcare practice, particularly those with fewer than three physicians,” said Delena Howard, director of LBA Healthcare Consulting Services. “Creating larger practices through these mergers provides more negotiation power with a variety of business needs, including insurance contracts, technology purchases, service delivery products and others. Mergers allow physicians to combine their resources and purchase technology that would have previously been unfeasible, thereby increasing the quality of the business and care delivery.”

Healthcare practices in Northeast Florida have also evolved their business model throughout the decade, with employee benefits changing with the insurance landscape. As healthcare costs continue to rise, healthcare practices have become more akin to a traditional business, with 50 percent less healthcare practices offering family health insurance coverage over the decade. Moreover, 50 percent more healthcare practices are offering short-term disability insurance (i.e., extended maternity leave) in 2010 compared to 2000.

“We’re seeing a trend in healthcare practices evolving to more of a traditional business model, as they must remain competitive and be profitable, just like any other business,” said Howard. “Just because a healthcare practice is a healthcare practice, does not automatically mean that it can offer 100 percent-paid health, dental and disability insurance to its employees and their families. It’s just not practical in today’s business environment.”

Similar to how benefit offerings have altered with the evolving business landscape of America, employment positions and their corresponding salaries have shifted over the past 10 years. Reflecting the national trend, positions have evolved to encompass new and expanded job



duties. Business manager positions are in less demand, as the role of practice administrator, office manager, billing supervisor and front office personnel have taken on a majority of those job functions. This trend is partially indicated by the significant increase in salaries in Northeast Florida compared to the national average. In 2000, practice administrator and office manager positions, to name a few, in Northeast Florida earned the same or slightly less than the national average, whereas the close of the decade saw those salaries increase by an average of \$2 to \$5 more per hour than the national average.

“Compared to the national average of salaries and positions, Northeast Florida has remained a competitive destination to seek employment in the healthcare field,” said Howard. “Practice administrators, for example, are now making an average of \$12 more per hour in Northeast Florida compared to the national average. The experience needed to perform that job, along with the increased amount of job functions from the combination of the roles of previous positions, has increased demand for those individuals. Increased billing, record-keeping and overall business demands of healthcare practices now require more experience and more time to perform the job effectively and efficiently.”

Below is a snapshot of the various comparisons in average salaries of Northeast Florida healthcare employees compared to the national average of those positions, as reported by respondents to LBA’s survey during the last 10 years.

- Practice administrator salary compared to national average:
 - 2000-2001: \$8 less
 - 2004-2005: \$2 more
 - 2009-2010: \$12 more
- Office manager salary compared to national average:
 - 2000-2001: \$1 more
 - 2004-2005: \$1 less
 - 2009-2010: \$5 more
- Business manager salary compared to national average:
 - 2000-2001: same
 - 2009-2010: \$12 less

The trend between 2000-2010 also illustrates several fluctuations in salaries for clinical positions in Northeast Florida compared to the national average. Physicians’ assistants in Northeast Florida, over the decade, have consistently earned an average of \$8 more an hour than the national average. Conversely, nurse practitioners’ salaries in Northeast Florida have consistently declined, balancing at an average of \$3 less per hour than the national average over the decade. Finally, LPN and RN salaries have declined over the decade compared to the national average by an average of \$10 less per hour.

For a complete copy of the current survey results, please call 904-396-4015.

About The LBA Group

The LBA Group is the largest locally owned and operated CPA firm in Northeast Florida. LBA offers tax, audit, accounting, strategic consulting, and litigation support services to private businesses, law firms, professional service firms, and nonprofit organizations. For more information about LBA, please visit www.TheLBAGroup.com.

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