

Recruitment Survey: Family Physicians Remain Top Choice Among Specialists

For the seventh consecutive year, the demand for family physicians outpaced the demand for other specialists, according to the annual Merritt Hawkins survey. The survey was based on more than 3,000 recruiting assignments conducted by the consulting firm between April 1, 2012, and March 31, 2013. It studied medical specialties based on candidate population size and found that family medicine remains "the most requested and difficult search out there in terms of the sheer number of requests," according to Travis Singleton, senior vice president for Merritt Hawkins. Although family physicians likely would be the most requested search based on the volume of physicians in the specialty, demand had a bigger role than the volume of the specialty, Singleton said. Family medicine and internal medicine ranked first and second, respectively, in terms of most-requested searches; 624 searches were performed for family physicians, followed by 194 for internal medicine physicians, 178 for hospitalists, 168 for psychiatrists, and 111 for emergency medicine physicians. For more information, visit <http://www.aafp.org/news-now/practice-professional-issues/20130916recruitingstudy.html>.

AAFP, Other Physician Groups Question Safeguards on Medicare Claims Data

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and other physician-led organizations are urging the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to apply a number of protections before releasing individual Medicare physician claims data. These protections should help ensure that claims data are used fairly, accurately, and in a way that promotes improvements in the U.S. health care system, the organizations say. In a letter to CMS, the AAFP, the American Medical Association, and dozens of other organizations urged CMS to partner with physicians to develop policies on the release of individual physician claims data. The groups asked CMS to focus on efforts to improve health care quality; to ensure that data are accurate by educating those accessing the information; to allow physicians to review and correct any errors; and to follow existing safeguards, including appropriate risk-adjustment and attribution methods, for any public reports that use the information. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news-now/government-medicine/20130910claimsdataltr.html>.

More Medical Students Opt for Family Medicine

The percentage of medical school graduates choosing family medicine residencies has increased nearly 10% during the past five years, according to a survey conducted by the AAFP. More than 67% of first-year family medicine residents graduated from U.S. allopathic or osteopathic medical schools in 2013, marking the fifth straight year that the percentage has increased. Perry Pugno, MD, vice president for medical education at the AAFP, said that despite these increases, the nation is not producing enough family physicians to meet the growing demand for primary care physicians, especially as the population ages and more patients seek health care coverage through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. About 3,500 family physicians graduate from U.S. medical schools each year, but approximately 40,000 more will be needed by 2020 to address current and anticipated demand, Pugno said. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news-now/education-professional-development/20130904fmresidency.html>.

CDC Report Details Threat and Scope of Antibiotic-Resistant Microbes

Each year, more than 2 million persons living in the United States contract an infection that is resistant to antibiotics, and 23,000 die from those infections. To better quantify this public health crisis and raise awareness about using antibiotics only when needed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report outlining the problem and ranking 18 microbes according to their threat levels: urgent, serious, and concerning. Topping the list of antimicrobial-resistant pathogens are *Clostridium difficile*, carbapenem-resistant *Enterobacteriaceae*, and drug-resistant *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. The next tier includes vancomycin-resistant *Enterococcus*, methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, and drug-resistant tuberculosis. Vancomycin-resistant *S. aureus*, erythromycin-resistant group A streptococcus, and clindamycin-resistant group B streptococcus make up the third tier. The report highlights how states, communities, patients, and health care professionals can combat antibiotic resistance. For more information, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance-threat-report-2013/pdf/ar-threats-2013-508.pdf>.

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