Physician pay increased in 2017 as demand grew, according to study

The demand put pressure on medical labor markets and underscoring the likelihood of increasing physician shortages.

Jeff Lagasse, Associate Editor

Physician compensation across the country grew 5.1 percent in 2017 as increased demand put pressure on labor markets, according to a new study from Doximity, a social network for physicians and advanced practice clinicians.

By studying physician job opportunities and compensation data, the report found significant job advertisements and compensation growth, analyzing 20 of the largest metropolitan areas and 15 common medical specialties.

Drawn from a sample of more than 12,000 physician job advertisements nationally, the report details the parts of the country and which medical
specialties have the highest demand for physicians. Compensation growth was drawn from 40,000 self-reported compensation surveys.

The past year found a big uptick in demand for physicians nationwide, the research found, putting pressure on medical labor markets and underscoring the likelihood of increasing physician shortages in the near term.

Along with the 5.1 percent increase in physician compensation, physician job advertisements have grown year-over-year in 10 large metropolitan areas. However, even within metro areas within the same state, there can be variation between physician demand across markets. San Francisco saw a 42 percent growth, while there was 1 percent growth in Los Angeles.

Among 10 common medical specialties analyzed, physician job postings have increased overall. Geriatrics saw the most growth, at 164 percent, compared to a 23 percent increase in cardiology.

Compensation, meanwhile, has grown in 10 large metropolitan areas, but despite the overall trend being up, there were several metro areas where physicians saw either declining or flat compensation growth.

At 16 percent, San Francisco led the way with the biggest growth in physician compensation, followed by Indianapolis (14 percent), Los Angeles (13 percent), Philadelphia (11 percent) and Milwaukee (10 percent).

Broken down by specialty, geriatrics saw the most job growth at 164 percent, far and above urology, which came in second at 49 percent. Rounding out the top five were oncology (45 percent), hematology (39 percent) and OB-GYN (31 percent).

In analyzing the growth in job advertisements, Doximity found that Boston saw the biggest increase in demand at 72 percent. It was followed by San Francisco (42 percent), Chicago (36 percent), Washington D,C. (23 percent) and New York (21 percent).