Compensation Survey
HTM Professionals Express Overall Job Satisfaction

Are you happy with your job? If you ask a healthcare technology management (HTM) professional that question, you’re likely to hear a firm “yes.” AAMI’s 2015 compensation survey of HTM professionals found that 84% of respondents report a high level of job satisfaction overall—a figure that matches closely with AAMI’s previous compensation survey, conducted in 2012.

However, as with just about any profession, there are things about it that its members like more or less than others. For instance, satisfaction with salary is rather high, at 77%. Workload satisfaction is a bit lower, at 69%. A scant 15% said they were “very” satisfied with the recognition their department receives.

While most of these figures are fairly consistent with the outcomes of the 2012 survey, a slight dip in workload satisfaction (from 72% in 2012 to 69% in 2015) may be noteworthy. We often hear that HTM departments are forced to do more and more with less and less, so the numbers support that observation.

AAMI’s compensation survey of HTM professionals is an effort led by AAMI’s Technology Management Council (TMC). TMC members review the survey questions to make sure they are current and relevant, and they suggest new questions to zero-in on emerging issues.

“TMC members have been extremely helpful over the years in refining, polishing, and sharpening the survey to make sure it provides useful and actionable information,” said Patrick Bernat, AAMI’s director of HTM.

As in previous years, the 2015 survey was conducted by Westat, a national research firm. The survey was e-mailed to a random sample of AAMI members who work in the HTM field; 302 people responded.

Salaries were broken down by job type, age range, specialty, education level, certification status, geographic region, job title, and employer type.

The survey included a year-over-year breakdown of salary increases by job title (2015 versus 2014). Those reporting “BMET I” as their job title saw a big boost in terms of minimum base salary, from $30,000 to $37,000. Total median compensation, including base salary and fringe benefits, was $52,800 for this job title. Those identifying as educators also saw a nice bump, from $75,250 to $79,250. BMET supervisors, however, had stagnant total median compensation at $81,000.

Geography had a clear association with compensation. Table 1 provides a geographic breakdown of median base compensation data for HTM professionals in 2015. Those living in the Mid-Atlantic region and the West saw the biggest payoff, with median base compensation coming in at $89,000 and $85,000, respectively.

Those working in the military reported the lowest levels of total compensation, with a median of $37,578. At the other end of the

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spectrum, two independent consultants who responded to the survey reported the highest, at $145,000.

**Aging of the Field**
The aging of the field has been a consistent topic of discussion at the AAMI Conference & Expo, local and state HTM association meetings, and other industry events. Survey results seem to support the concern that fewer young people are entering the field. Of respondents, 41% were between 55 and 64 years of age, while only 9% indicated they were between 25 and 34 years of age.

The good news, though, is that those who stick it out saw a big jump in terms of base compensation by the time they reached their mid-30s. The base compensation in the 35–44 age group was 37.2% more than that in the 25–34 age group ($78,500 vs. $57,213).

That more mature professionals responded to the survey came as no surprise to several HTM veterans. Dennis Minsent, a TMC member and president of Healthcare Technology Management Solutions, LLC in Saint Helens, OR, said the responses were about what he expected. However, while these statistics didn’t surprise Steve Yelton—also a TMC member and an HTM professor at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College—he surmised that there could be more than meets the eye.

“I suspect that more of the older group took the time to reply,” he said, adding that many of his students fall into that range, with an average age of 27.

**A Question of Certification**
Fifty-three percent of respondents indicated they hold a CBET certification (for biomedical equipment technician). Those professionals reported a median annual salary of $79,250. Meanwhile, certified radiology equipment specialists (CRES) and certified laboratory equipment specialists (CLES) had a median annual salary of $74,750 and $87,000, respectively.

Jennifer Gentry, a new recruit to the HTM field who is contracting through Modis for Children’s Medical Center in Dallas, TX, said she was very interested in gaining her CBET but found time lacking. “I have not pursued my CBET as of yet, but I hope to do so in the near future. I feel it would only improve my financial and educational gain,” the recent graduate of Brown Mackie College in Dallas, TX, said. “I’m less than a year into the field, so I feel as if I have some time. There’s plenty for me to learn.”

Cayla Balely, a CBET at the Indian Health Service in Mount Pleasant, MI, agreed that becoming certified is important, as it demonstrates that an employee is dedicated to his or her work. “Obtaining CBET certification is difficult and involves passing a tough, multifaceted exam,” she said. “Most individuals commit a lot of time to studying for the examination and quite a few will test more than once.”

While becoming a CBET remained an attractive option, less than 10% of respondents indicated they had a CRES or CLES. That total didn’t surprise Yelton. “I feel that this is totally in line with what I see in the field,” he said. “Many more technicians are working on general biomedical equipment and therefore elect to take the CBET exam. I would guess that there is at least a five-to-one, if not greater, ratio of CBET to CRES and CLES in the field.”

**Climbing the HTM Ladder**
While HTM professionals may enjoy overall job satisfaction, a considerable percentage (32%) indicated that opportunities for advancement are limited. Minsent said that

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Median base compensation ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>85,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>73,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>77,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>89,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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Table 1. Median base compensation for healthcare technology management professionals in 2015 (all job categories combined).
Note: Survey participants self-selected their region.
this situation will remain the same unless the field develops a closer relationship with the C-suite in hospitals.

Yelton, however, said he hasn’t witnessed a lot of complaints from his students about advancing from entry-level to senior technicians but has heard that it is difficult to enter into management or leadership roles. This is true despite the fact that Yelton has found that “a lot of technicians in Cincinnati-area hospitals have completed considerable education beyond the associate's degree level. Many have received BS degrees and beyond.”

Avinash Konkani, a clinical engineer at the University of Virginia Health System, acknowledged that moving ahead in HTM is more difficult compared with information technology. “It takes several years to get solid confidence on some equipment,” Konkani said. “With BMETs, unless they get higher education and move on to become a supervisor or perhaps a clinical engineer, there is not much growth; therefore, continued education is the key to success.”

While those between 25 and 34 years of age started with a base compensation of $57,213, they saw a dramatic increase over the next 10 years—to $78,500. Such jumps were not seen in the next two age groups, which reported base compensation of $79,580 (ages 45–54) and $81,000 (ages 55–64).

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Whether you want to grow in your current position or look for other opportunities in the HTM field, AAMI’s Career Planning Handbook helps you identify goals and chart your path to advancement. The guide also helps you have meaningful conversations with your supervisor and/or other organizational leaders about your career objectives.

In addition, AAMI’s Leadership Development Guide serves as a companion piece to the Career Planning Handbook, for those who aspire to leadership positions. Managing other staff for the first time can be a daunting career move. Therefore, the Leadership Development Guide offers guidance on how to grow the skills needed for leadership positions, such as communication. It can be used as a navigation tool for your path into leadership.

These documents can be downloaded for free at AAMI’s HTM Career Resources page (www.aami.org/career_resources).