Healthcare Technology Management

AAMI Survey Sheds Light on Salaries, Benefits

Robert King

Much like the health of the overall economy, salary growth in the healthcare technology management (HTM) field over the past two years has been a mixed bag, according to a 2012 AAMI employment survey. There were a few positive signs with some base salaries rising—with one type of job in particular seeing a significant salary increase—and more fringe benefits. But the salary growth was mostly modest.

Information technologists/technicians saw a substantial increase in their base salaries: a 30% jump, from $61,500 in 2010 to $80,000 in 2012. The average base for a clinical engineer rose 3.6% to $72,500 in 2012.

“I think the salaries appear to be healthy, but of course everyone wants more,” said Kenneth Maddock, vice president of healthcare technology management and telecommunications services for Baylor Health Care System and a member of AAMI’s Board of Directors.

Alan Lipschultz, president of HealthCare Technology Consulting LLC, stresses that salaries tell only one part of the story when it comes to compensation.

“What healthcare benefits are expensive,” he says. “The degree to which employers subsidize those costs cannot be ignored when looking at total compensation.”

The survey was conducted by Westat, a national research firm. The survey was e-mailed to a random sample of HTM professionals in late February and 425 responded—89% were male and 11% female. Just about half of the respondents (49%) identified themselves as certified biomedical equipment technicians.

Salary information was broken down by job title, geographic location, education, specialty, and type of employer. Respondents were also asked about their job satisfaction, hours worked, what kind of additional training they would desire, and the relationship between healthcare technology management and information technology at their facilities.

Some highlights:
- An overwhelming majority of respondents reported general job satisfaction, but the level varied depending on specifics. For

![Figure 1. Median Base Compensation for All Job Categories in 2012](image)

**About the Author**

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On the question of the relationship between HTM and IT, 68% of respondents said the departments were separate, while 10% said the two had been merged into one.

Table 1. Median base and total compensation. Total compensation equals base compensation plus additional compensation such as overtime, on-call pay, bonuses. There weren’t enough BMET I respondents to include in the table.

Example, 83% of respondents said they were satisfied with their work environments, but a lower number, 78%, said they were satisfied with their salary, and fewer still, 72%, said they were satisfied with their workload. Only 15% of the respondents said they were very satisfied with the recognition their department receives.

- When it comes to areas of interest for additional training, 56% of respondents named “IT training” followed by “project management” with 42%, and “information technology infrastructure library (ITIL)” at 33%.

A sizable chunk of respondents said they were currently advancing their level of education and training. The most popular means were through national conferences and seminars, by attending local biomedical association meetings and conferences, and by attending online webinars.

- On the question of the relationship between HTM and IT, 68% of respondents said the departments were separate, while 10% said the two had been merged into one. Interestingly, while 10% of respondents said that HTM reports to IT, only 1% said the reverse was true, that IT reported to HTM.

- Close to one quarter, 24%, of respondents said they had done volunteer work in medical technology in the past two years.

- Few respondents reported being in a union, just 5%, but those that did reported slightly higher salaries. On average, the median base salary for a unionized HTM professional (combining all job types) was $74,000 in 2012. The average base salary for those who were not unionized was $71,550.

- Asked about vacation time, 43% of respondents said they receive between four to five weeks of vacation and other days off each year; 31% said they receive less than four weeks of vacation; and 23% said they receive more than four to five weeks.

- Employers varied in the types of fringe
On average, more hospitals provided their employees with continuing education, subsidized healthcare, and pensions than other employer types. Manufacturers gave out more bonuses/profit sharing and contributions to health savings. And independent service organizations provided more of their employees with a car allowance and disability insurance.

- The median year when respondents said they would retire: 2025.
- Certification is recognized in different ways—through bonuses, gift cards, and more rapid advancements in grade. And 37% of respondents said they received an increase in compensation because they were certified.

The survey wasn’t designed for employers to establish or recommend salary levels or job responsibilities, but it can be used by employers and employees to gauge their own salaries against others in the field.

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**Stay Tuned**

The July Issue of *AAMI News* will have more coverage about the employment survey.
JOB TITLES DEFINED

Although job titles vary widely in the industry, the following were provided to survey respondents for the purpose of this survey:

**BMET: Biomedical Equipment Technician I**
An entry-level or junior BMET. Works under close supervision. Performs skilled work on preventive maintenance (PM), repair, safety testing, and recording functional test data. Not certified. Usually has less than four years of experience.

**BMET: Biomedical Equipment Technician II**
A BMET who usually has a two-year degree or higher. Has good knowledge of schematics and works independently on repairs, safety testing and PM. Maintains records, writes reports, and coordinates outside repairs. Average experience is eight years.

**Senior BMET: Biomedical Equipment Technician III**
A highly experienced or specialized BMET usually having an AS (two-year) degree or higher. Has substantial experience and may be certified (CBET). Does highly skilled work of considerable difficulty. Has comprehensive knowledge of practices, procedures, and types of equipment. Average experience is twelve years.

**Equipment Specialist: Lab Equipment Specialist (LES) or Radiology Equipment Specialist (RES)**
A highly specialized BMET having special training, or equivalent experience in lab equipment (LES) or radiology equipment (RES). Usually has an associate's degree or higher. Performs highly skilled work of considerable difficulty and may hold certification as CLES or CRES.

**BMET Supervisor**
A BMET who supervises others. Has a significant amount of training or education or equivalent experience. Most have a bachelor of science degree or higher. Schedules and assigns work to subordinates, but also continues to do highly skilled repairs. Has comprehensive knowledge of practices, procedures, and types of equipment. Average experience is 13 years.

**Clinical Engineer (CE)**
A graduate engineer holding a BS, MS or PhD. Performs engineering-level work of considerable difficulty. Has the ability to modify devices, and conduct analysis of devices and systems.

**Clinical Engineering Supervisor**
A CE who supervises BMET/peer/subordinate CEs; may also supervise equipment specialists. Usually degreed engineer at BA, MS, or PhD level. Average experience is 21 years.

**Director/Department Manager**
Most are educated or experienced as CEs or BMETs, but others may be trained in administration or business or have extensive healthcare supervisory experience. Most have a significant amount of technical or management experience, and have the skills to select high-tech equipment, and acquire, maintain, and repair equipment. Supervises BMETS, CEs, and support personnel. May also be the Chief Technology Officer or Vice President for Healthcare Technology.

**IT Technologist/Technician**
An IT technologist/technician manages projects in the areas of system administration, software development, and network security, and provides direct technical support in at least one of these areas.

**Service Engineer**
A graduate engineer holding a BS, MS, PhD, or higher. Has substantial experience and may be certified (CBET). Does highly skilled work of considerable difficulty. Has comprehensive knowledge of practices, procedures, and types of equipment and may hold certification as CLES or CRES.