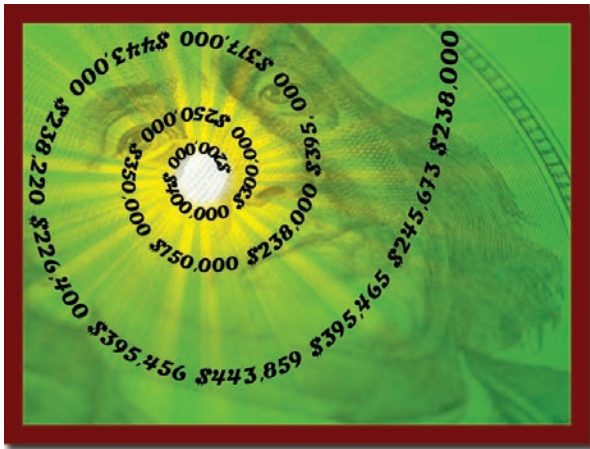




BY JARROD SHAPIRO, DPM



2016 Physician Salaries

The numbers tell the story.

Practice Perfect is a continuing every-issue column in which Dr. Shapiro offers his unique personal perspective on the ins and outs of running a podiatric practice.

It's an interesting exercise to look back at our income for 2016 and compare it to prior years. Whether we're looking back on changes and trends in the economy, politics, or medicine, we often find many significant events occurred. Numbers often tell us a story of the past that help elucidate the future, so let's look at some numbers and trends.

One of those interesting trends was mentioned in a recent *New Yorker* article which implicated physicians in desiring to eliminate the Affordable Care Act (or healthcare reform in general) because of a concern for reduced wages.¹ However, despite this concern, physicians have continued to do well monetarily despite the rising costs of medical care.

Since many physicians have complained about their dropping wages over time, you might be skeptical about the *New Yorker* article's conclusions. So, when in doubt, look for statistics. A couple of interesting stats were found. First, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), some of the common physician incomes for the year 2014² are shown in Figure 1.

Let's take a look at where the podiatric profession sits with these numbers. According to the BLS, national estimates from May 2015 for podiatric wages are \$136,180 (annual

is \$187,199.⁴ Clearly, podiatrists can stand to have an increase in salary. Happily, this same U.S. News site rates podiatrists as the 14th top paying job. To answer the original ques-

The average physician makes \$51,000 more than the average podiatrist.

national average), with the top five paying states (in descending order)³ are shown in Figure 2.

For perspective, according to U.S. News, the median physician salary

(Are physicians' salaries on the rise or not?), according to this same site, physician salaries were on the rise until 2010, at which point they stagnated and have remained at approximately the above stated averages since then. How these figures change with the incoming presidential administration and future medical changes is anyone's guess.

While researching these statistics, you'll come across an interesting set of information that elucidated the current state of affairs. Medscape published its yearly *Physician Compensation Report*⁵ for 2016. They performed an online survey of 19,183 physicians across 26 specialties and found some interesting trends. Unfortunately, podiatry is not included in the survey, but despite that, the results of the

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FIGURE 1:
Some of the Common Physician Incomes for the Year 2014

Anesthesiology	\$443,859
General surgery	\$395,456
Obstetrics/gynecology	\$317,496
Psychiatry	\$245,673
Internal Medicine	\$238,227
Pediatrics	\$226,408

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survey are informative.

See Figure 3 for some of the major findings. For the full survey results see citation 5 at the end of this article.

Pay for almost all medical specialties was up in 2016 except for allergy, pulmonary, pathology, plastic surgery, and anesthesiology.

Interestingly, there were some major differences regarding gender,

work part time during child-rearing years. However, this survey eliminated all part-time physicians and only included those who worked at least 40 hours/week. Clearly, the glass ceiling still exists in the medical field. These trends particularly interesting in light of a prior editorial

Women surveyed made 25% less than their specialist male counterparts and 15% less when in primary care.

with most female physicians surveyed being employed (72% women versus 59% men). Additionally, women earned significantly less income than men, regardless of whether they were in primary care or specialties.

In fact, women surveyed made 25% less than their specialist male counterparts and 15% less when in primary care. Now, you may argue that these numbers make sense, since a number of women may

about the challenges of women in medicine. Our society has a lot of work to do to advance the treatment of female physicians.

Numbers and statistics are tricky animals, and we always have to be cautious not to make too many overarching conclusions from one survey, but the numbers seem reasonably clear here. Doctors in general, especially the men, are doing well from an income standpoint. What happens in the near future is anyone's guess. **PM**

**FIGURE 2:
2015 Podiatric Wages,
the Five
Top-Paying States**

Hawaii	\$268,140
Nebraska	\$201,140
Wisconsin	\$190,440
Missouri	\$176,680
Texas	\$169,800

Editor's Note: For further analysis of podiatrists' gross and net income, read *Podiatry Management's Annual Survey Report in the February 2017 issue* or at podiatrym.com/Annual_Survey_report2.cfm. The report covers 2015 median income data.

References

- ¹ Surowieki, J. Doctors Orders. The New Yorker, Dec 19 and 26, 2016: 50.
- ² Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition, Physicians and Surgeons, on the Internet at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physicians-and-surgeons.htm> (visited December 18, 2016).
- ³ Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2015: 29-1081 Podiatrists, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes291081.htm#\(2\)](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes291081.htm#(2)). Last accessed 12/18/2016.
- ⁴ Best Jobs: Physician Salary. US News, <http://money.usnews.com/careers/best-jobs/physician/salary>. Last accessed 12/18/2016.
- ⁵ Physician Compensation Report, <http://www.medscape.com/features/slideshow/compensation/2016/public/overview#page=1> Last accessed 12/18/2016.

**FIGURE 3:
Medscape's Physician
Compensation Report for 2016**

The top 5 and bottom 5 earning physicians are shown here.

Top	\$	Bottom	\$
Orthopedics	\$443,000	Pediatrics	\$204,000
Cardiology	\$410,000	Endocrinology	\$206,000
Dermatology	\$381,000	Family Medicine	\$207,000
Gastroenterology	\$380,000	Infectious disease	\$215,000
Radiology	\$375,000	Allergy	\$222,000


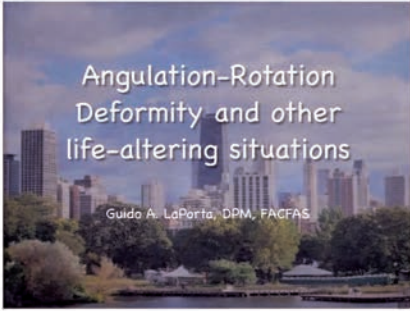
Dr. Shapiro is editor of PRESENT Practice Perfect. He joined the faculty of Western University of Health Sciences, College of Podiatric Medicine, Pomona, CA in 2010.

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