

For Immediate Release:

**SURVEY: 60% OF PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS
WOULD CHOOSE ANOTHER FIELD**

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August 30, 2007, Baltimore—Almost two-thirds of primary care physicians would choose another field if they had their careers to do over, a new survey indicates, while more than 50 percent consider themselves “second class citizens” compared to surgical and diagnostic specialists.

The survey was conducted for *Physicians Practice*, an award-winning practice-management journal read by more than 275,000 physicians nationwide. Conducting the survey was physician search and consulting firm Merritt, Hawkins & Associates. The annual survey is intended to measure the career satisfaction levels and concerns of primary care doctors, defined as family practitioners, general internists, and pediatricians. The survey suggests that though primary care doctors are both busy and in increasing demand, they are not necessarily satisfied with their place in the medical hierarchy.

“Between declining reimbursement, rising overhead, and loss of autonomy and respect, primary care physicians are feeling battered” notes Pamela Moore, senior editor of *Physicians Practice*. “That makes it more crucial than ever for them to create the sort of practice they can actually enjoy.”

Only about 40 percent of primary care physicians surveyed said they would stay in primary care if they had their medical education to do over again. About 39 percent said they would become surgical or diagnostic specialists, while about 22% said they would not choose medicine as a career.

Over 80 percent of primary care physicians surveyed indicated that they have busy practices, while fewer than 17 percent stated that they are not busy enough. Over 57 percent said they are contacted about job opportunities about 50 times per year by physician recruiters. Both these findings suggest that primary care physicians are in robust demand and that the job market for their services is favorable.

However, about 60 percent of those surveyed felt that the income they derive from their practice is disappointing. About 50 percent of primary care physicians indicated they earn \$150,000 or less a year. By contrast, Merritt, Hawkins & Associates' data indicate that cardiologists, radiologists and other medical specialists commonly earn \$300,000 or more. Not surprisingly, fewer than 15 percent consider themselves equal partners with surgical and diagnostic specialists, while 85 percent consider themselves either "junior partners" or "second class citizens."

Practice overhead is a concern for many of the primary care physicians surveyed. The majority (62 percent) said overhead in their practices runs at 50 percent of their income or more. This can make a practice difficult to sustain, Moore notes. Almost 40 percent expressed doubt that their practices could support projected overhead over the next five years.

Complete results of the survey are included in the September/October issue of *Physicians Practice* magazine, and online at www.physicianspractice.com.

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About *Physicians Practice*. *Physicians Practice* provides award-winning practice-management advice to more than 275,000 physicians through partnerships with 60 medical centers throughout the United States. For more than 17 years, doctors have trusted *Physicians Practice* for expertise on billing, coding, collections, technology, workflow, staffing, compensation, and much more. *Physicians Practice* is published by CMP Healthcare Media, LLC, a division of United Business Media.

About Merritt, Hawkins & Associates. Merritt, Hawkins & Associates is a leading physician search and consulting firm. Based in Irving, Texas it is a division of AMN Healthcare (NYSE: AHS), the largest health care staffing firm in the United States.