

Psychiatrist

Professional Activities

Psychiatrists are the primary mental healthcare givers. They assess and treat mental illnesses through a combination of psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, hospitalization, and medication. Psychotherapy involves regular discussions with patients about their problems; the psychiatrist helps them find solutions through changes in their behavioral patterns, the exploration of their past experiences, or group and family therapy sessions. Psychoanalysis involves long-term psychotherapy and counseling for patients. In many cases, medications are administered to correct chemical imbalances that cause emotional problems.

Psychiatrists review and evaluate treatment procedures and outcomes of other psychiatrists and medical professionals and advise and inform guardians, relatives, and significant others of patients' condition and treatment. They prepare case reports and summaries for government agencies.

Some psychiatrists teach, conduct research, and publish findings to increase understanding of mental, emotional, and behavioral states and disorders.

Psychiatrists work in small private offices or clinics, often assisted by a small staff of nurses and other administrative personnel. Increasingly, physicians are practicing in groups or healthcare organizations that provide backup coverage and allow for more time off. Physicians in a group practice or healthcare organization often work as part of a team that coordinates care for a number of patients; they are less independent than the solo practitioners of the past.

Many Psychiatrists work long, irregular hours. In 2008, 43 percent of all physicians and surgeons worked 50 or more hours a week. Nine percent of all physicians and surgeons worked part-time. Physicians and surgeons travel between office and hospital to care for their patients. While on call, a physician will deal with many patients' concerns over the phone and make emergency visits to hospitals or nursing homes.

Educational Requirements

Formal education and training requirements for physicians are among the most demanding of any occupation—4 years of undergraduate school, 4 years of medical school, and 3 to 8 years of internship and residency, depending on the specialty selected.

Acceptance to medical school is highly competitive. Most applicants must submit transcripts, scores from the Medical College Admission Test, and letters of recommendation. Schools also consider an applicant's character, personality, leadership qualities, and participation in extracurricular activities. Most schools require an interview with members of the admissions committee.

Students spend most of the first 2 years of medical school in laboratories and classrooms, taking courses such as anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, pharmacology, psychology, microbiology, pathology, medical ethics, and laws governing medicine. They also learn to take medical histories, examine patients, and diagnose illnesses. During their last 2 years, students work with patients under the supervision of experienced physicians in hospitals and clinics, learning acute, chronic, preventive, and rehabilitative care. Through rotations in internal medicine, family practice, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, psychiatry, and surgery, they gain experience in the diagnosis and treatment of illness.

Following medical school, almost all M.D.s enter a residency—graduate medical education in a specialty that takes the form of paid on-the-job training, usually in a hospital. Most D.O.s serve a 12-month rotating internship after graduation and before entering a residency, which may last 2 to 6 years.

To practice medicine as a physician, all States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories require licensing. All physicians and surgeons practicing in the United States must pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) or, for osteopathic physicians, the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing

Exam (COMLEX). To be eligible to take the USMLE or COMLEX, physicians must graduate from an accredited medical school. Although physicians licensed in one State usually can get a license to practice in another without further examination, some States limit reciprocity. Graduates of foreign medical schools generally can qualify for licensure after passing an examination and completing a U.S. residency. For specific information on licensing in a given State, contact that State's medical board.

Academic Programs

[Loyola University Chicago](#)

[Midwestern University](#)

[Northwestern University](#)

[Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science](#)

[Rush University](#)

[Southern Illinois University](#)

[University of Chicago](#)

[University of Illinois at Chicago](#)

Employment/Salary Outlook

Employment of physicians and surgeons is projected to grow 22 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than the average for all occupations. Job growth will occur because of continued expansion of healthcare-related industries. The growing and aging population will drive overall growth in the demand for physician services, as consumers continue to demand high levels of care using the latest technologies, diagnostic tests, and therapies. Many medical schools are increasing their enrollments based on perceived new demand for physicians.

Despite growing demand for physicians and surgeons, some factors will temper growth. For example, new technologies allow physicians to be more productive. This means physicians can diagnose and treat more patients in the same amount of time. The rising cost of healthcare can dramatically affect demand for physicians' services. Physician assistants and nurse practitioners, who can perform many of the routine duties of physicians at a fraction of the cost, may be increasingly used. Furthermore, demand for physicians' services is highly sensitive to changes in healthcare reimbursement policies. If changes to health coverage result in higher out-of-pocket costs for consumers, they may demand fewer physician services.

State and National Wages

Location	Pay Period	2009				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$31.53	\$53.14	\$77.04	\$80.00+	\$80.00+
	Yearly	\$65,600	\$110,500	\$160,200	\$166,400+	\$166,400+
Illinois	Hourly	\$24.92	\$30.35	\$34.43	\$52.06	\$80.00+
	Yearly	\$51,800	\$63,100	\$71,600	\$108,300	\$166,400+

State and National Trends

Employment Trends are for **Physicians and surgeons**, which includes Anesthesiologists ; Family and General Practitioners ; Internists, General ; Obstetricians and Gynecologists ; Pediatricians, General ; Physicians and Surgeons, All Other ; **Psychiatrists** ; Surgeons .

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2008	2018		
Physicians and surgeons	661,400	805,500	+22%	26,050

Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2008	2018		
Physicians and surgeons	25,710	30,010	+17%	880

¹Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

Professional Organizations

American Psychiatric Association
 1000 Wilson Boulevard
 Suite 1825
 Arlington, VA 22209
<http://psych.org/>

American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.
 2150 E. Lake Cook Road, Suite 900, B
 Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
 Phone: 847.229.6500 Fax: 847.229.6600
<http://www.abpn.com/home.htm>

References

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-11 Edition, Physicians and Surgeons, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos074.htm>

O*NET OnLine, on the Internet at
<http://online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/29-1066.00>

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