Leaders of ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) received bigger raises than their hospital counterparts this year, according to the 2006 annual OR Manager Salary/Career Survey. ASC managers averaged a 5% pay boost, while hospital OR managers averaged 4%. Last year the average raise for an ASC manager was 3.9%.

Despite larger increases, ASC leaders earn more than $10,000 less on average than hospital-based OR leaders. The average ASC manager’s salary is $82,170, while the average OR manager earns $92,680.

The higher hospital salaries reflect a difference in responsibilities. ASC managers on average manage 21.6 clinical FTEs and 6.4 nonclinical FTEs, whereas hospital OR managers oversee 82.7 clinical FTEs and 21.1 nonclinical FTEs. ASC directors manage an average of 4.2 ORs, compared to hospital-based OR managers and directors, who are responsible for an average of 11 ORs.

The OR Manager Salary/Career Survey data is based on surveys mailed to 600 ASCs. In all, 112 ASCs replied, for a 19% response rate.

**Salary breakdowns**

The highest average salary, $110,300 (n=3), was reported by managers of corporate-owned ASCs, followed by $98,500 (n=6) for hospital-owned facilities, $83,770 (n=47) for joint ventures, and $75,580 (n=45) for physician-owned ASCs.

Facilities in the Central region of the US pay slightly more on average—$84,330—than those in the West ($83,530), East ($82,340), and South ($73,320). The highest salary in this year’s survey was reported by an ASC director in the West—$148,000.

ASC directors at facilities with 5 or more ORs earn $10,000 more ($89,020) than directors at facilities with fewer than 5 ORs ($78,910). Suburban ASCs pay about 10% more than urban centers and 16% more than rural centers.

**Bonuses and profit sharing**

Despite lower salaries, ASC directors are more likely to be eligible for incentive bonuses and profit sharing than hospital-based OR directors. In all, 64% of ASC directors are eligible for these perks, versus 40% of OR managers and directors in hospitals.

Leaders in corporate-owned (100%, n=4) or joint venture (66%, n=31) ASCs are
the most apt to offer incentives. The average incentive amounted to 9.0% of ASC leaders’ base salaries.

Benefits
Hospitals and ASCs provide health insurance and paid time off almost equally, but other benefits weigh in the hospitals’ favor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASC Hospitals</th>
<th>Hospitals</th>
<th>Physician owned</th>
<th>Corporate owned</th>
<th>Joint venture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid time off</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life insurance</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement plan</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental insurance</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition reimbursement</td>
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<td>91%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability insurance</td>
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<td>86%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependent health insurance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye care</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management role
The most common title for ASC is director (32%) or administrator (32%), followed by nurse manager (24%). A majority of respondents report to the facility’s administration (46%), followed by the board of directors (25%), medical director (16%), or corporate office (5%). Half say they manage the ORs only at one ASC, while the other half manages the ORs and other departments at one ASC.

Purchasing influence
More respondents to this year’s survey—45%—say they are the primary decision maker in purchasing decisions, compared with 35% in 2005. The remainder are members of a purchasing committee or team (30%) or serve in an advisory capacity (24%). Nearly all (97%) influence both the selection and purchase of capital equipment and surgical supplies.

About your ASC
The respondents’ ASCs are owned predominantly by physicians (45%) or joint ventures (44%). The largest group is located in the suburbs (46%), followed by urban (33%) or rural (21%) areas.

Most are performing more surgery. More than half—57%—say their surgical volume has increased in the past year, while 29% reported their...
volume stayed the same, and 14% said it decreased. The average increase in volume is 9%, and the average decrease is 11%.

The average overall annual operating budget for responding ASCs is $5.7 million. Only 47% (n=53) responded to this question.

Who accredits ASCs?
The largest group of respondents (45%) says their facility is accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care, followed by 23% that are accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (23%). In all, 23% are not accredited. One facility is accredited by the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities and the rest, by some other organization.

Information systems
Nearly three-fourths of ASCs (70%) have computerized information systems. Of those, only 28% have computers in each operating room.

About you
The average age of OR directors at ASCs and hospitals inches up each year, reaching 51 (50.6 to be exact) for ASCs and 51.4 for hospitals in 2006. All but 8 of this year’s ASC survey respondents are RNs. In all, 12% of ASC leaders are males, compared with 15% of hospital-based managers and directors.

Fewer ASC nursing leaders hold master’s degrees than their hospital colleagues. In ASCs, 42% of ASC managers have an associate degree or diploma as their highest degree, while in hospitals, 23% do.

Highest degree held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest degree held</th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, 41% (n = 45) of respondents say their ASC requires a specific degree for their position. For these, the degree required is a:

- Bachelor’s: 73% (n=32)
- BSN preferred: 39% (n=17)
- Master’s: 16% (n=7)
- MSN preferred: 5% (n=2)

—Leslie Flowers