



The Not-What-You-Would-Expect Guide to
**Healthcare
Administration**

*Honestly, it's
not for
everyone!*



Table of Contents

- 03 Overview of Healthcare Administration
- 04 Medical Billing & Coding
- 05 Health Information Management
- 06 Medical & Health Services Management
- 08 Education & Training
- 09 Skills & Competencies
- 10 Advancement & Specialization
- 11 Industry Challenges & Trends
- 13 Resources





Overview of Healthcare Administration

Healthcare administration is the management and organization of healthcare systems, facilities, and providers. It encompasses a wide range of responsibilities aimed at ensuring that healthcare organizations operate efficiently, deliver quality patient care, and comply with evolving regulations and standards. Healthcare administrators play a vital role in overseeing the daily operations of healthcare facilities, such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and outpatient centers. They also manage budgets, staffing, healthcare policies, and strategic planning to help their organizations meet the needs of patients and communities.

At its core, healthcare administration focuses on balancing the operational, financial, and human resources elements of healthcare systems while maintaining a patient-centered approach. Administrators must coordinate between various departments—medical staff, billing, human resources, and regulatory compliance teams—ensuring that everything functions smoothly. They are responsible for creating an environment where healthcare professionals can deliver high-quality care while ensuring that patients' needs are met in a safe, effective, and efficient manner.

Additionally, healthcare administration requires a strong understanding of healthcare laws and regulations, including patient privacy laws (such as HIPAA), billing procedures, and insurance practices. With the increasing complexity of healthcare systems, administrators are also expected to stay ahead of trends in healthcare technology and policy reform, ensuring that their facilities can adapt to new changes while continuing to serve patients effectively. The ultimate goal of healthcare administration is to align the operations of a healthcare organization with its mission to provide accessible and high-quality healthcare to the population it serves.

Healthcare administrators are not only concerned with the business aspects of running a healthcare facility but also play a critical role in shaping policies and making strategic decisions that impact the quality and accessibility of healthcare services. Their leadership ensures that healthcare organizations are financially sustainable, comply with regulations, and are prepared to adapt to challenges in the evolving landscape of healthcare.



Medical Billing & Coding

Medical billing and coding is a specialized profession within the healthcare industry that focuses on translating medical diagnoses, procedures, and treatments into standardized codes. These codes are essential for processing healthcare claims with insurance companies, government programs, and patients. Medical billers and coders ensure that healthcare providers are reimbursed accurately and promptly for their services, while also maintaining compliance with regulatory standards.

The process begins with **medical coders** who review patient records and assign codes using classification systems such as the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and Current Procedural Terminology (CPT). These codes categorize patient diagnoses, procedures, and medical services. Coders must have a deep understanding of medical terminology, anatomy, and healthcare regulations to accurately code patient records.

Once the coding is complete, **medical billers** take the coded information and submit claims to insurance companies or billing entities. They ensure that the claim complies with payer requirements and follow up on any discrepancies or denials. Billers may also interact with patients to explain charges or collect payments. Both coders and billers play a crucial role in the financial health of healthcare organizations by ensuring proper reimbursement for services rendered.

A career in medical billing and coding typically begins with formal education and certification. Many employers prefer candidates who have completed a certification program, such as those offered by the American Academy of Professional Coders (AAPC) or the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). With experience, professionals can advance to roles such as coding supervisor, billing manager, or even transition into health information management, auditing, or compliance.

The profession offers flexibility, with many opportunities for remote work, and is expected to grow as the healthcare industry continues to expand and adapt to evolving regulations and technology. It's a detail-oriented role that requires precision, organization, and a strong understanding of healthcare systems.

BLS.gov projects the job outlook for medical billers and coders to grow

9%

from 2023-2033*

*Cited job outlook projections may not reflect local economic fluctuations and do not guarantee job placement. BLS.gov data retrieved on September 24, 2024 and subject to change.



Health Information Management

Health Information Management (HIM) is a profession that combines the disciplines of healthcare, information technology, and data management to ensure the accurate, secure, and efficient handling of patient information. HIM professionals play a critical role in the healthcare system by managing health records, overseeing the use of health information technology, ensuring regulatory compliance, and analyzing health data to support decision-making and improve patient care.

At its core, HIM involves the maintenance of electronic health records and the management of all processes related to the collection, storage, and access of patient health information. HIM professionals are responsible for ensuring that medical data is accurate, up-to-date, and properly protected in accordance with healthcare laws such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). This profession requires a deep understanding of both medical terminology and the legal framework governing healthcare information.

The field of health information management is rapidly evolving with advancements in technology, particularly with the widespread adoption of electronic health records and health information exchanges. HIM professionals often work closely with IT teams to implement and maintain systems that ensure the integrity and accessibility of patient data. They also play a key role in data governance, ensuring that information is handled in a manner that complies with federal and state regulations, as well as organizational policies.

In addition to managing health records, HIM professionals analyze healthcare data to identify trends, improve operational efficiency, and support clinical and administrative decision-making. They may work in various healthcare settings such as hospitals, physician offices, insurance companies, and public health organizations.

With the increasing importance of data-driven decision-making in healthcare, HIM professionals are often involved in developing and managing health information systems that support quality improvement initiatives, risk management, and patient privacy. Their expertise in both data management and healthcare regulations makes them key players in shaping the future of healthcare through the responsible use of health information.

BLS.gov projects the job outlook for health information managers to grow

16%

from 2023-2033*

*Cited job outlook projections may not reflect local economic fluctuations and do not guarantee job placement. BLS.gov data retrieved on September 24, 2024 and subject to change.



Medical & Health Services Management

Medical and health services management, also known as healthcare administration or healthcare management, is a profession focused on the strategic planning, organization, and oversight of healthcare facilities, departments, or systems. Professionals in this field manage the daily operations of hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, physician practices, and other healthcare organizations, ensuring they deliver high-quality care efficiently while complying with regulations and financial constraints.

At its core, the profession involves coordinating a broad array of functions, including financial management, staffing, regulatory compliance, patient care services, and technology implementation. Medical and health services managers work closely with medical professionals, administrators, and support staff to create an environment where healthcare providers can focus on delivering effective patient care. Their work requires balancing the needs of patients, healthcare workers, and the organization's financial and operational health.

In addition to operational management, these professionals are responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures that align with the organization's goals and with legal and ethical standards. This can include handling budgeting, overseeing billing systems, managing staff schedules, and ensuring that the organization meets state and federal healthcare regulations, including those related to patient privacy, safety, and quality of care.

Medical and health services managers must also stay current with evolving trends and technologies in healthcare, such as electronic health records, telemedicine, and advancements in healthcare delivery models. These advancements require them to make decisions on the adoption of new technologies or processes that can improve patient care and operational efficiency. Additionally, they often play a key role in addressing emerging challenges, such as adapting to changes in healthcare laws, managing the impacts of public health issues, or responding to shifts in patient demographics.

Medical and health services management offers diverse career paths, with opportunities to specialize in specific areas such as hospital administration, nursing home management, or clinical department management (e.g., surgery, cardiology).

BLS.gov projects the job outlook for medical and health services managers to grow

29%

from 2023-2033*

*Cited job outlook projections may not reflect local economic fluctuations and do not guarantee job placement. BLS.gov data retrieved on September 24, 2024 and subject to change.

Day-to-Day Responsibilities



Medical Coders

- Reviewing Patient Medical Records
- Assigning Standardized Codes
- Ensuring Coding Accuracy and Compliance
- Working with Healthcare Providers
- Staying Up-to-Date on Coding Guidelines



Medical Billers

- Submitting Claims to Insurance Companies
- Verifying Patient Insurance
- Following Up on Denied or Rejected Claims
- Tracking and Processing Payments
- Interacting with Patients
- Managing the Revenue Cycle



Health Information Managers

- Managing Health Records
- Ensuring Regulatory Compliance
- Overseeing the Use of Health Information Technology
- Managing Data Privacy and Security
- Analyzing and Utilizing Health Data
- Managing Clinical Coding and Billing Information
- Educating Staff on Health Information Practices
- Facilitating Information Exchange
- Supporting Clinical and Administrative Decision-Making
- Participating in Strategic Planning



Medical and Health Services Managers

- Overseeing Daily Operations
- Budgeting and Financial Management
- Ensuring Regulatory Compliance
- Managing Human Resources
- Ensuring Quality of Patient Care
- Strategic Planning and Policy Development
- Managing Healthcare Technology
- Collaborating with Medical and Administrative Teams
- Handling Risk Management and Crisis Response

Education & Training

Undergraduate Degree

- An associate or bachelor's degree are typically the minimum educational requirement for entry-level positions in healthcare administration. It provides foundational knowledge in healthcare systems, business management, and administrative practices.

Graduate Degree

- While a bachelor's degree may be sufficient for entry-level roles, most healthcare administrators in mid-to-senior level positions hold a master's degree. It is widely considered the preferred credential for advancing into leadership roles in larger or more complex healthcare organizations, such as hospitals, health systems, or government agencies.



ANU offers degree programs to prepare you for a career in this field:

- Associate's in Health Information Management
- Bachelor's in Medical & Health Services Management
- MBA with a Specialization in Healthcare Management

Certifications

These certifications are typically pursued after formal education or while working in the field.

- Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE): This certification, offered by the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE), is highly respected and demonstrates mastery in healthcare leadership.
- Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems (CPHIMS): For professionals interested in health information technology and systems.
- Certified Healthcare Financial Professional (CHFP): Offered by the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), this certification is for those focused on the financial aspects of healthcare management.



As part of the HIM program, students will have the opportunity to take the **Registered Health Information Technician (RHIT)** certification exam offered through the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA).



Valerie Jett, HIM Graduate, '24
"I think online learning is just as good as in-person learning. It's not as chaotic, it's a lot more structured, to be honest. It's structured with flexibility."

Skills & Competencies

Professionals in healthcare administration require a broad set of skills and competencies to effectively manage healthcare facilities, navigate the complexities of healthcare regulations, and ensure that organizations run efficiently while delivering high-quality patient care. Here's a breakdown of the key skills and competencies needed for success in healthcare administration:



Leadership & Management

- Team Leadership
- Decision-Making
- Change Management
- Managing Initiatives



Financial Management

- Budgeting
- Revenue Cycle Management
- Cost Control



Communication & Collaboration

- Interpersonal Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Public Speaking
- Collaboration



Knowledge of Regulation & Law

- Healthcare Compliance
- Accreditation Standards
- Ethical Decision-Making



Analytical & Critical Thinking

- Data Analysis
- Problem-Solving
- Strategic Planning



Knowledge of Healthcare Technology

- Electronic Health Records Management
- Health Information Systems
- Data Privacy & Security



Human Resources Management

- Staff Recruitment & Retention
- Performance Management
- Workforce Development



Adaptability & Flexibility

- Navigating Industry Changes
- Crisis Management



Patient-Centered Focus

- Patient Experience Management
- Patient Advocacy

Jennifer Kojro, HIM Graduate, '23
"I think online learning is just as good as in-person learning. It's not as chaotic, it's a lot more structured, to be honest. It's structured with flexibility."





Advancement & Specialization

Healthcare administration offers a wide range of advancement and specialization paths, allowing professionals to tailor their careers to specific interests and goals. As healthcare administrators gain experience and develop their skills, they can advance to higher-level roles within healthcare organizations or specialize in areas that align with their expertise.

Specialization Paths

- Healthcare Informatics
- Health Policy and Public Health Administration
- Nursing Home Administration
- Healthcare Quality Improvement
- Healthcare Risk Management
- Medical Practice Management
- Clinical Department Management
- Healthcare Human Resources Management
- Healthcare Financial Management
- Academic or Teaching Roles

Advancement Opportunities

- Department of Unit Manager
- Assistant or Associate Administrator
- Hospital Administrator or Health System Executive
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operating Officer

Consulting & Entrepreneurship

- Healthcare Consultant - Some administrators choose to work as independent consultants, advising healthcare organizations on improving operations, financial performance, or regulatory compliance.
- Entrepreneur - Professionals with extensive experience may also start their own healthcare-related businesses, such as specialized consulting firms, healthcare tech startups, or healthcare management service organizations.

Melanie Hillard, MBC & HIM Graduate, '23

"Just go for it because ANU makes it so easy for anybody and all of their schedules... It's really doable."



Industry Challenges & Trends

Healthcare administration faces a dynamic environment, with both ongoing challenges and emerging trends that affect the way healthcare organizations operate and deliver services. Here are some of the key industry challenges and trends that healthcare administrators must navigate.

Industry Challenges

Controlling **rising healthcare costs** is a significant issue for healthcare organizations. Costs associated with medical services, prescription drugs, medical technology, and administrative overhead continue to rise, putting pressure on hospitals and healthcare systems to find ways to deliver high-quality care while managing expenses.

Healthcare is one of the most heavily regulated industries, and keeping up with constantly **changing regulations**—such as those related to patient privacy (HIPAA), value-based care, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and Medicare/Medicaid billing—can be overwhelming.

There is a growing **shortage of healthcare professionals**, including physicians, nurses, and allied health workers, due to factors like an aging workforce, burnout, and increasing demand for healthcare services.

Health disparities—differences in health outcomes based on socioeconomic status, race, geography, or other factors—continue to be a major issue. Additionally, access to care remains a challenge in rural or underserved areas.

Patients today expect a **higher level of service** from healthcare providers, including shorter wait times, better communication, and more personalized care. Patient satisfaction is increasingly tied to reimbursement models, making it a critical area of focus.

The digitization of healthcare records and the widespread use of electronic health records (EHRs) have made healthcare organizations a prime target for **cyberattacks and data breaches**.

The shift from fee-for-service to **value-based care**, which ties reimbursement to patient outcomes rather than the volume of services provided, has created challenges for healthcare organizations in terms of adapting business models and workflows.





Industry Trends

Telemedicine has become a mainstream mode of delivering care, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote consultations, virtual follow-ups, and digital health tools have made healthcare more accessible.

AI and data analytics are transforming healthcare by enabling predictive modeling, personalized medicine, and improved operational efficiency. AI can assist in areas like diagnostics, resource allocation, and patient monitoring.

Population health management focuses on improving health outcomes for specific groups of people by coordinating care, identifying risk factors, and implementing preventive measures. This trend aligns with the shift to value-based care.

The integration of **advanced health information technology** systems, such as electronic health records (EHRs), health information exchanges (HIEs), and patient portals, continues to shape healthcare delivery.

Patients today are more empowered and informed, demanding greater transparency, convenience, and access to care. The **consumerization of healthcare** is driving innovations like retail clinics, home care, and direct-to-consumer health services.

There is growing recognition that **social determinants of health**, such as income, education, housing, and access to nutritious food, significantly impact health outcomes.

As healthcare becomes more diverse, organizations are increasingly focusing on **workforce diversity and inclusion** initiatives to ensure that the healthcare workforce reflects the populations they serve.

There is a growing emphasis on **sustainability and eco-friendly** practices within healthcare organizations, such as reducing waste, using renewable energy, and adopting environmentally friendly policies.

Resources

Professional Organizations & Associations

- American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE)
- Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA)
- Medical Group Management Association (MGMA)
- Association for Healthcare Administrative Professionals (AHCAP)
- American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)
- National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB)

Industry Publications & Journals

- Modern Healthcare
- Healthcare Executive Magazine
- Journal of Healthcare Management
- Health Affairs

Networking & Career Development Platforms

- LinkedIn
- ACHE Events and Conferences
- MGMA Annual Conference
- HIMSS Global Health Conference & Exhibition

Online Communities & Forums

- Reddit – Healthcare Management Forum
- Healthcare Executives Network

Ellen Fuhrken, MBC Graduate, '24

"They're affordable, and easy, and flexible. I've had a lot of support. The first term, I got a phone call every week going 'hey, how are you doing? Do you need anything?' I got emails... The support is fantastic."

Amanda Reed, HIM Graduate, '24

"My kids are all very active in sport and I don't want to miss that, so with a work from home job, I have that flexibility. And medical billing and coding has a lot of [opportunity]."

