

# CERTIFIED HEALTH PHYSICIST SALARY SURVEY

## JUNE, 1995

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### INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the CHP salary survey conducted by Gary Lautenschlager, CHP, of the Midwest Chapter of the Health Physics Society, in association with the American Academy of Health Physics. Elizabeth Thompson, CHP, also of the Midwest Chapter provided invaluable peer review of the survey results and co-authored this paper. Nancy Daugherty, CHP, provided many ideas for this survey. And not least, credit is due to Nancy Johnson, Program Director, AAHP Secretariat, for her assistance in collecting the survey responses during a busy time for the ABHP exams. CHPs were asked to respond to this salary survey in the December, 1994 *CHP News* that was co-distributed with Volume XXII, Number 12 of *The Health Physics Society's Newsletter*. A total of 188 responses were received by the March 31, 1995 deadline. Responses were also received from some non-certified health physicists. While these were not solicited, they are discussed later in this report.

### DISCUSSION

Respondents were asked to provide information in many categories, including years of experience and geographic location to name just two. The many categories were intended to help generate generic CHP profiles. For example, one profile could have been CHPs with a Ph.D. in Health Physics who were employed at universities, had 10 - 15 years experience, and worked in the northeast region of the country. However, given the number of responses received it was not possible to obtain more detailed profiles than are presented in this report. As the profiles became more specific, there were fewer responses that fit the categories. In general for this report, profiles do not appear where there were fewer than ten responses that fit a particular profile. A few exceptions are presented in the report.

The CHP profiles in this report were generated based on the perceived interest to a large number of readers. There are certainly other profiles that could have been created, but were not because there were not enough responses that fit the profile. For instance, the profiles of CHPs with American Board of Radiology or American Board of Nuclear Medicine certification do not appear because no responses were received with the ABNM category checked, and only four responses were received with the ABR category checked. A few respondents thought a category for American Board of Medical Physics certification should have been included in the survey, to which the authors concur. The next CHP salary survey should include this category.

### THE "WITH BENEFITS" QUESTION

Regrettably, there was much confusion over the question of whether the respondent's salary was "with benefits." If a respondent's salary was "with benefits," it was intended to indicate that the salary so checked was a base salary with the employer providing a benefits package in addition to the salary, not to indicate that the salary was total compensation that included the cost of those benefits. For instance, government employees probably receive health, retirement, and other benefits in addition to their base salary and should have checked "yes;" whereas a private consultant probably does not and should have checked "no." Only 94 out of the total 188 CHP respondents checked "yes" for the "with benefits" question, 39 out of 188 checked "no," and 55 did not indicate either. A few respondents who had checked "yes" included handwritten notes indicating that the salary checked was (in the authors' interpretation) actually a total compensation figure. Because the data for this question is highly suspect, none of the CHP profiles generated include this category.

### RESULTS

For each CHP profile, the average salary, median salary, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum salaries are reported. The number of responses that fit the category and were used in the calculations is indicated by N. Salaries indicated as greater than \$110,000 were not included in the data for determining the average, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum. The number of respondents earning more than \$110,000 per year in each category is indicated by M. The salary ranges from the survey were reduced to the midpoints of the ranges for analyzing the data. For example, the salary range \$50,000 to \$54,999 was assigned a value of \$52,500. Calculated values for the average and standard deviation were rounded to the nearest \$500.

#### By Education

Education Category	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
Bachelor's Other Field	\$71,000	\$67,500	\$15,500	\$47,500	\$102,000	20	1
Bachelor's Health Physics	\$61,000	\$67,500	\$15,000	\$37,500	\$77,500	9	0
Master's Health Physics	\$76,000	\$77,500	\$14,000	\$47,500	\$107,500	78	8
Master's Other Field	\$71,500	\$72,500	\$14,000	\$47,500	\$97,500	31	4
Ph.D. Health Physics	\$79,500	\$72,500	\$16,500	\$57,500	\$107,500	17	2
Ph.D. Other Field	\$76,500	\$75,000	\$14,500	\$57,500	\$102,500	16	2

Note: In some cases respondents indicated more than one degree. If a respondent indicated more than one degree, the highest level of education was used for data analysis. If a respondent indicated a degree in health physics and another degree at the same level of education, the data were counted only in the health physics degree category.

#### By ABHP Certification

Certification Category	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
Comprehensive	\$74,000	\$72,500	\$15,000	\$47,500	\$107,500	147	15
Power Responder	\$71,000	\$72,500	\$16,500	\$37,500	\$97,500	13	0
Dual	\$79,000	\$77,500	\$13,000	\$62,500	\$107,500	11	2

By Employer Type

Employer Type	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
Federal Government	\$81,000	\$82,500	\$12,000	\$62,500	\$92,500	15	1
Consulting Firm	\$83,000	\$87,500	\$13,000	\$67,500	\$107,500	22	3
Government Contractors	\$70,500	\$70,000	\$10,500	\$52,500	\$92,500	30	2
Commercial	\$80,000	\$82,500	\$14,500	\$57,500	\$102,500	13	4
Medical Facility	\$74,000	\$70,000	\$18,500	\$37,500	\$102,500	6	3
University	\$69,500	\$72,500	\$17,500	\$47,500	\$102,500	19	2
National Laboratory	\$71,500	\$72,500	\$13,000	\$47,500	\$107,500	26	0
Nuclear Power Utility	\$69,500	\$67,500	\$16,000	\$37,500	\$107,500	28	0

By Master's in Health Physics and Years Experience

Years Experience	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
10 - 15 Years	\$69,000	\$72,500	\$11,500	\$47,500	\$92,500	19	0
15 - 25 Years	\$79,500	\$77,500	\$12,000	\$57,500	\$107,500	33	2
>25 Years	\$82,000	\$77,500	\$15,500	\$47,500	\$107,500	19	5

By Master's Other Field and Years Experience

Years Experience	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
10 - 15 Years	\$59,500	\$57,500	\$8,000	\$47,500	\$92,500	8	0
15 - 25 Years	\$78,500	\$82,500	\$11,000	\$57,500	\$92,500	14	2
>25 Years	\$74,500	\$72,500	\$15,500	\$52,500	\$97,500	7	2

By Bachelor's Other Field and Years Experience

Years Experience	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
>25 Years	\$78,000	\$72,500	\$15,500	\$62,500	\$102,500	9	1

All CHPs By Region of Country

Region of Country	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
Northeast	\$76,500	\$77,500	\$16,500	\$47,500	\$107,500	47	6
Southeast	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$13,000	\$37,500	\$97,500	40	3
Northwest	\$76,500	\$72,500	\$14,000	\$57,500	\$102,500	20	1
Southwest	\$78,000	\$77,500	\$11,500	\$62,500	\$107,500	36	5
Midwest	\$73,500	\$77,500	\$15,000	\$52,500	\$102,500	25	2

All CHPs by Primary Job

Primary Job Category	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
Administration	\$78,500	\$77,500	\$13,000	\$47,500	\$102,500	29	5

Note: Many respondents checked multiple boxes in this area. The only credible category for which there was a significant number of respondents checking a single box was administration. That is why it is the only profile provided here.

All CHPs by Metropolitan Employment Area Population

Size of Metropolitan Area	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
>500,000	\$75,500	\$77,500	\$17,000	\$47,500	\$107,500	71	12
300,000 - 499,999	\$73,000	\$72,500	\$13,000	\$37,500	\$92,500	21	0
100,000 - 299,999	\$71,500	\$67,500	\$14,500	\$47,500	\$102,500	32	1
50,000 - 99,999	\$83,000	\$80,000	\$12,500	\$67,500	\$102,500	12	1
20,000 - 49,999	\$63,500	\$67,500	\$9,000	\$47,500	\$77,500	17	2

All CHPs With Other Certifications

Other Certification	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
PE	\$78,000	\$82,500	\$15,000	\$47,500	\$102,500	15	0

**TOP TEN REASONS TO SEEK CERTIFICATION**

There were many reasons given for pursuing certification. An abbreviated list of those is presented here.

10. "Free training and study time during work offered by employer."
9. "Personal goal representing professional achievement."
8. "It was a challenge and represented a level of proficiency in my field. At the time, income and employment were a secondary consideration."
7. "Professional advancement."
6. "To increase my luck. Luck is when opportunity meets preparation."
5. "To prove that I was a Health Physicist and not just a computer nerd."
4. "Because it was there and highly respected by the HP professionals I work with."
3. "Professional recognition."
2. "To increase knowledge, i.e., CHP is a goal that requires effort to achieve (and maintain)."
1. "To establish credentials."

**RESPONSES FROM HEALTH PHYSICISTS NOT ABHP CERTIFIED**

A number of responses were received from health physicists who apparently are not ABHP certified. Although these were not solicited, and the number was limited, a summary of the data is presented here. A good source of salary data for health physicists is provided by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science Education. The contact for this information is Duveen Shirley who can be reached at (615) 576-3409. This information is also available via e-mail at: shirleyd@orau.gov

Education Category	Average Salary	Median Salary	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N	M
Bachelor's Other Field	\$55,500	\$52,500	\$11,000	\$27,500	\$77,500	18	2
Master's Health Physicist	\$58,500	\$57,500	\$15,000	\$27,500	\$92,500	14	1
Master's Other Field	\$54,500	\$52,500	\$11,500	\$32,500	\$72,500	11	0

**SUMMARY**

The authors thank all those who took the time to complete and send in this survey. Although there were not enough responses to provide more detailed profiles, we hope that what is provided here is useful to many. Future surveys will be improved to remove some of the ambiguities inherent in these results. ■