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Top Issues Confronting Hospital CEOs: 2005

In 2005, the top issues confronting hospital CEOs remain the same. The survey asked respondents to rank the three most pressing issues affecting their hospital and identify specific areas of concern. Following are results from the survey, which was sent on September 13, 2005, to 941 hospital CEOs, 399 (42 percent) of whom responded.

I. Top Issues Confronting Hospitals

Each of the following issues is listed by percentage of respondents who indicated it as one of the top three issues confronting their hospital. Financial challenges far exceeded other issues as hospital CEOs' number one issue. This year, 67 percent of respondents cited financial challenges as one of their top three concerns, reflecting a modest decline from 71 percent in 2004. In 2005, 36 percent of hospital CEOs identified personnel shortages as a major concern. Of note, this issue has dropped in importance since 2003, when 58 percent of respondents identified it as a top concern. Care for the uninsured continues to rank as a top-three issue, with 35 percent of respondents citing it as a major concern. Particularly noteworthy are the continued rise in importance of quality and patient safety from 2003 to 2005, the drop in respondents citing malpractice insurance as a major concern from 2004 and the issue of patient satisfaction gaining ground steadily since 2003.

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Issue	2003	2004	2005
Financial challenges	73%*	71%	67%
Personnel shortages	58%	33%	36%
Care for the uninsured	26%	36%	35%
Physician/hospital relations	26%	32%	33%
Quality	17%	18%	23%
Patient safety	9%	16%	20%
Patient satisfaction	7%	13%	18%
Capacity	28%	16%	17%
Technology	12%	14%	17%
Governmental mandates	18%	19%	16%
Malpractice insurance	24%	25%	11%

*Listed as "Reimbursement" in the 2003 survey.

II. Specific Concerns Within the Top Issues

Within each of the three issues, respondents also identified specific concerns facing their hospital. Following are those concerns in order of importance for the top three issues identified in the survey.

Financial Challenges

Medicaid	82%
Medicare	71%
Bad debt	68%
Revenue cycle management	44%
Managed care payments	42%
Emergency Department	40%
Other commercial insurance	30%
Outlier payments	13%

Personnel Shortages

Registered nurses	85%
Imaging technicians	58%
Pharmacists	57%
Therapists	50%
Physicians—surgical specialists	48%
Enhancing staff skills	47%
Physicians—medical specialists	41%
Lab technicians	32%
Physicians—generalists	31%
Complying with staffing ratio requirements	27%
Entry-level support staff	26%

Nurse anesthetists	24%
Worker dissatisfaction	21%
Succession planning for boards, managers, clinical leaders	20%
Licensed practical nurses	15%

Care for the Uninsured

Medicaid	85%
Underwriting costs	80%
Advocacy for funding	66%
Reaching out to all community members	28%

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