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The New Compensation Leader Resource Guide

Checklists and resources for your first 90 days as a physician compensation leader

Stepping into a physician compensation leadership role means learning a lot in a short amount of time. This guide covers the information you need to gather, the people to meet, how often to communicate with physicians and clinicians, and the outside resources that can support you along the way.

What's inside

1 Part 1 — Information to gather in your first 30 days

2 Part 2 — Key relationships and questions to ask

3 Part 3 — Sample communication cadence

4 Part 4 — Outside resources

Use the checklists in this guide during your first 30 days and keep them handy as you build relationships and plan for what comes next.

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1 Information to gather in your first 30 days

Organizational basics

- [ ] The organization's compensation philosophy and goals
- [ ] Your reporting and approval structure, including whether there's a physician compensation committee
- [ ] The full scope of what your department owns, such as contracts, accruals, workbooks, dashboards, and plan designs

Financial arrangements

- [ ] A list of the arrangement types under your purview, such as employed physicians, professional services agreements (PSAs), independents, and as-needed (PRN) arrangements
- [ ] A census of those arrangements, including a note on how long it took to get

Governance

- [ ] Compensation committee charter
- [ ] Approvals behind each compensation program
- [ ] Any fair market value (FMV) or compliance documentation

Compensation plan mechanics

- [ ] Compensation plan documents
- [ ] Calculation methodologies
- [ ] Physician contracts and amendments

Data

- [ ] Work relative-value unit (wRVU) productivity data
- [ ] Payment and accrual workbooks
- [ ] Benchmark sources and data cuts, such as the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA), SullivanCotter, or the American Medical Group Association (AMGA)

Compensation program history

- [ ] When each program was last updated
- [ ] Whether a review cadence exists
- [ ] Which specialties get more scrutiny than others

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2 Key relationships and questions to ask

Organizational leaders

Meet with your chief financial officer (CFO), the head of human resources (HR), general counsel, and your clinical and compliance leadership teams. Ask each of them:

- What do you see as the biggest compensation-related challenges?
- How would you define success in my role a year from now?
- What led the organization to fill this role?

If others were responsible for physician compensation before you, ask them what challenges they faced.

Departments to prioritize

Department	Why the relationship matters
Operations	Understands the day-to-day work your physicians and clinicians do, which is essential when designing plans such as shift-based compensation programs.
Finance	Manages the monthly accruals that hit the profit and loss (P&L) statement.
Compliance	Serves as your guardrail on FMV, regulatory risk, and contracts.

All three departments usually sit on the compensation committee, too.

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2 Key relationships and questions to ask (continued)

Physician leaders and champions

Start with administrative and executive leadership, then move on to physician champions and subcommittees. Ask them:

- What are your biggest pain points with compensation?
- What do you like about your compensation plan?
- What don’t you like about it?

Informal influencers

Identify the people others trust most, even if they don’t hold formal leadership titles. Ask them:

- Which physicians are most vocal?
- What types of pay-related complaints do you hear most often?

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3 Sample communication cadence

Your communication schedule should match how often new pay data becomes available. Here's a recommended cadence you can scale to fit your organization's size:

How often	Who	What
Ongoing	**Physicians and clinicians**	An assigned analyst they can contact with questions
Monthly	**Physicians and clinicians**	Compensation dashboards
Quarterly	**Business leaders**	Updates on practice performance, including who is hitting or missing targets and who is coming off a guarantee
Quarterly	**Physicians, by specialty**	Town halls with open and anonymous question-and-answer (Q&A) sessions, including education on basics like wRVUs and panels
Annually	**Business leaders**	A review of each compensation plan to see whether it performed as designed

Match the messenger to the conversation. Analysts can handle routine questions, while managers or directors should handle more sensitive or difficult conversations.

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4 Outside resources

Professional organizations	**American Association of Provider Compensation Professionals (AAPCP).** A resource for continuing education for you and your team. Before assuming you need a new hire, consider whether education could help your current team build the skills it needs. providercompensation.org
Benchmark surveys	MGMA, SullivanCotter, and AMGA each publish physician compensation and productivity surveys. Know which sources and data cuts your organization uses, and why.
External advisors	Consulting and valuation firms can supply expertise your team doesn't have in-house. A few tips: • Use advisors to educate your team, not only to complete work. • If you're working with many firms, consider narrowing the list to two or three. You may get more favorable pricing and a better handle on how services are being ordered.
Peer network	Connect with other physician compensation leaders in similar roles. Peers who've faced the same challenges can be one of your most valuable sounding boards.

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4 Ludi resources

1 Physician Compensation Team Maturity Assessment

See where your team stands on the compensation team maturity curve.

ludiinc.com/resources/physician-compensation-team-maturity-assessment

2 The Pay Transparency Self-Assessment

Evaluate how transparent your compensation program is for physicians, together with your physician leader.

ludiinc.com/resources/physician-pay-transparency-self-assessment

3 Comp & Contribution

Ludi's YouTube channel covering all things physician and clinician compensation, including calculating wRVUs, managing full-time equivalent (FTE), and understanding the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS).

youtube.com/@CompAndContribution

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About Ludi. Ludi, Inc. builds the physician compensation platform at the center of physician enterprise management for health systems, hospitals, academic medical centers, and medical groups. The Ludi Platform runs every way physicians and clinicians get paid in one connected system, with an audit trail behind every number. Founded in 2012, Ludi serves more than 600 client sites across 46 states. Learn more at ludiinc.com.

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