



SDN Completes Second Annual Health Care Student Survey

Southern Pines, N.C. – May 9, 2013 - Student Doctor Network, a non-profit educational website, today announced the results of its second annual user survey, which covers the impacts of student debt and the future of health care.

Educational debt, and how it impacts the lives and decisions of future health care providers, was a focus of the survey. Some of the key findings:

- **Students are questioning the value of their educational spending**
More a third of medical students and physicians indicate that they felt the educational value they received for the money they spent for their doctoral degree was average or below.
- **Debt has wide-reaching impact on student's lives**
More than a third of respondents indicate that it would impact where they choose to live, what specialty they will practice and their ability to purchase a home.
- **Rising debt impacts specialty choice**
There was a direct correlation between the amount of debt incurred and specialty choice for medical students and physicians, with about 30 percent of those with debts under \$50,000 reporting that their debt was impacting their specialty choice, but over 70 percent of those with debts over \$200,000 reporting an impact.
- **Health care students are taking on increasing amounts of debt**
Over 30 percent of current health care graduate students (including medical, dental, pharmacy, and podiatry students) and those with graduate degrees will have or had debt of over \$200,000 upon degree completion. This is a jump of over five percent from the 2012 results.

“Spiraling educational debt is a real issue, and it is impacting the choices our future health care providers are making about their practices and lives,” said Dr. Lee Burnett, SDN founder and board member.

Respondents were also asked about the future of health care in the U.S.:

- **Respondents are neutral about the future of U.S. health care**
On average, most respondents feel that U.S. health care quality is remaining about the same, not getting better or worse, with 32 percent stating that it is getting worse and 32 percent that it is getting better. This is a jump from the 2012 results, when 44 percent stated that it was getting worse and only 23 percent stated that it was getting better.
- **Health care reform is viewed more positively by younger respondents**
Younger respondents view health care reform initiatives more positively than older respondents, with 47 percent of respondents aged 18-24 indicating that health care reform would improve healthcare versus 39 percent of respondents aged 35-44.
- **Universal coverage supported by majority of respondents**
Over half of all respondents indicate that universal coverage would make health care better.

The survey was conducted in February 2013. A total of 979 respondents completed the survey, of which 916 met the survey criteria (U.S. resident age 18 or older).

“Our membership is composed of current and future health care providers, who have a unique perspective on the changing landscape of health care in the United States,” added Dr. Burnett. “SDN is excited to share their views via these survey results, so that their voices can be heard as we continue the debate about the best way to move health care forward.”

Respondents were recruited for the survey via the Student Doctor Network forums (<http://forums.studentdoctor.net>), Facebook postings on the Student Doctor Network pages and Twitter. Links to the survey report are available in the online newsroom (<http://studentdoctor.net/about-sdn/newsroom/>).

The Student Doctor Network (SDN) is a professional community of thousands of pre-health and health professional students from across the United States and Canada and around the world. Founded in 1999, our non-profit site is run by volunteers and is dedicated to providing students with free and unbiased information. SDN is published by the Coastal Research Group, a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt educational organization.