



SLP HEALTH CARE SURVEY



Survey Report: Trends Related to Private Practice Owners 2005–2009

Gail Brook
Surveys & Information Team

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
2200 Research Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20850
800-498-2071, ext. 8737
gbrook@asha.org

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Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the 2009 SLP Health Care Survey to gather information about caseloads, salaries, working conditions, and workforce issues from a random sample of ASHA-certified speech-language pathologists (SLPs). Results from this survey are compiled in a series of reports, including this report on trends related to private practice owners. Results from the 2005 and 2007 ASHA SLP Health Care Surveys are also included in this report for comparative purposes.

The statistic that is presented as the “average” in this report is the median (i.e., middle or 50th percentile) unless otherwise noted.

Survey Highlights

- For 2007 and 2009, slightly more than 50% of private practice owners indicated that they worked full-time (52% and 53%, respectively).
- In 2007, private practice owners had an average (mean) of 4 staff members; in 2009, they had an average (mean) of 6 staff members.
- For 2007 and 2009, the most common source of payment for services was patient private pay; the least common was Medicare.
- In 2007 and 2009, overall, private practice owners delivered about one quarter of their services to infants and toddlers, one quarter to preschoolers, one quarter to school-age children, and one quarter to adults.
- For 2007 and 2009, slightly more than half of private practice owners indicated that they did not work with adults. Of those who did, the largest percentage of their time was spent in the area of swallowing disorders.
- For 2007 and 2009, only 13% of private practice owners indicated that they did not work with pediatric patients. Of those who did, the largest percentage of their time was spent in the area of language disorders.
- In 2009, private practice owners who were paid an annual salary reported having a median annual salary of \$70,000, up slightly from \$69,511 in 2007 but down from \$80,000 in 2005.
- In 2009, private practice owners who were paid an hourly wage reported having a median hourly wage of \$70.00, up slightly from \$68.95 in 2007 but down from \$77.40 in 2005.
- In 2007 and 2009, about 65% of private practice owners indicated that ASHA was doing a good or excellent job in serving its health care-based members.

Employment Status

For the 2007 and 2009 surveys, full-time employment was defined as working 30 or more hours per week. Part-time employment was defined as working fewer than 30 hours per week.

In 2007 and 2009, slightly more than 50% of private practice owners indicated that they worked full-time (52% and 53%, respectively). The remainder indicated that they worked part-time (data not shown in any table).

Size of Staff

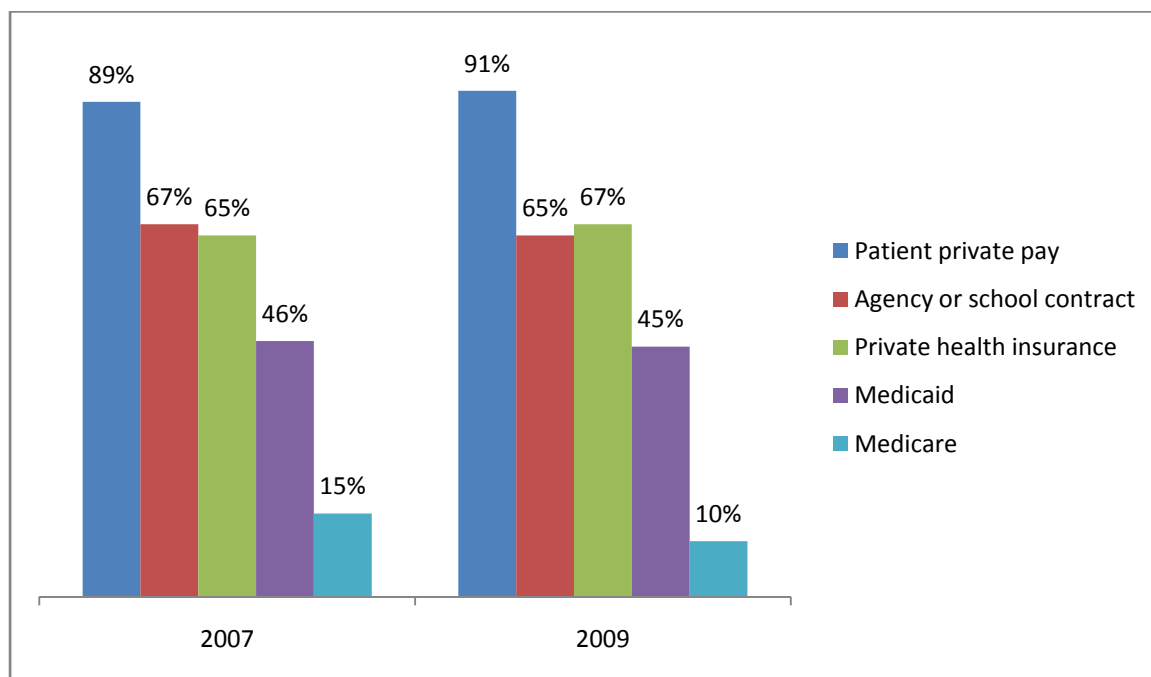
In 2007, private practice owners reported having an average (mean) of 4 staff members (2 SLPs, including themselves), 1 office worker, and 1 clinical service provider who was not an SLP (e.g., an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, or a social worker). In 2009, they reported having an average (mean) of 6 staff members (3 SLPs, including themselves), 1 office worker, and 2 clinical service providers who were not SLPs (data not shown in any table).

Sources of Payment

In 2007 and 2009, the most common source of payment for services was patient private pay (89% and 91%, respectively); the least common was Medicare (15% and 10%, respectively; see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Sources of Payment for Services for Private Practice Owners, 2007 and 2009.

Percentage of SLPs responding “yes” to the question “Do you receive payment for services for your private practice from the following sources?”



n = ≥ 297 (2007); n = ≥ 320 (2009)

Populations Served

In 2007 and 2009, private practice owners delivered their services to infants and toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, and adults in near equal percentages (see Table 1).

Table 1.
Populations Served by Private Practice Owners, 2007 and 2009.

What percentage of your services is delivered to the following populations?		
Populations	2007	2009
Infants and toddlers	28%	24%
Preschoolers	22%	26%
School-age children	24%	28%
Adults	26%	23%

n = 422 (2007); *n* = 459 (2009)

Adult Patient Services

In 2007 and 2009, private practice owners who worked with adults spent about one third of their time treating patients with swallowing disorders (35% and 30%, respectively). They also spent considerable amounts of time treating patients with aphasia and cognitive-communication disorders (see Table 2).

Table 2.
Adult Patient Services Provided by Private Practice Owners, 2007 and 2009.

Of the time that you spend providing ADULT services, approximately what percentage is spent in the following areas?		
Areas	2007	2009
Accent modification/communication effectiveness	5%	6%
Aphasia	19%	17%
Cognitive-communication disorder	15%	*
Dementia	*	7%
Traumatic brain injury	*	6%
Other	*	5%
Motor speech	9%	9%
Prevention	1%	*
Swallowing	35%	30%
Voice/resonance	8%	11%
Other	8%	9%

*Not a survey question response category

Note. In 2009, the “Cognitive-communication disorder” category was replaced by the more specific “Dementia,” “Traumatic brain injury,” and “Other” subcategories under the heading “Cognitive communication.”

n = 206 (2007); *n* = 211 (2009)

Pediatric Patient Services

In 2007 and 2009, private practice owners who worked with pediatric patients spent large portions of their time treating patients with language disorders and articulation and phonological disorders. They also spent considerable portions of their time treating patients with cognitive-communication disorders and swallowing and feeding disorders (see Table 3).

**Table 3.
Pediatric Patient Services Provided by Private Practice Owners,
2007 and 2009.**

Of the time that you spend providing PEDIATRIC services, approximately what percentage is spent in the following areas?		
Areas	2007	2009
Articulation-phonology	25%	27%
Cognitive communication	14%	12%
Fluency	4%	5%
Language	40%	38%
Prevention/wellness	1%	1%
Swallowing and feeding	10%	9%
Voice/resonance	2%	2%
Other	4%	5%

n = 347 (2007); *n* = 379 (2009)

Overall Annual Salary

In 2009, private practice owners who worked full-time and were paid an annual salary reported having an overall median annual salary of \$70,000, up slightly from \$69,511 in 2007 but down from \$80,000 in 2005 (a 13% decline; data not shown in any table).

Overall Hourly Wage

In 2009, private practice owners who were paid an hourly wage reported having a median hourly wage of \$70.00, up slightly from \$68.95 in 2007 but down from \$77.40 in 2005, a 10% decline (data not shown in any table).

ASHA Services

In 2007 and 2009, about 65% of private practice owners indicated that ASHA was doing a good or excellent job in serving its health care-based members; about 30% indicated that ASHA was doing a fair job; and about 5% indicated that ASHA was doing a poor job (data not shown in any table).

**Response
Rate (2009)**

The survey was mailed in March 2009 to a random sample of 4,000 ASHA-certified SLPs who were employed in health care settings in the United States. Second (April) and third (May) mailings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

The random sample was stratified by type of facility and by private practice. Small groups, such as pediatric hospitals, were oversampled. Therefore, where results are reported for all respondents (“overall”), either in text or tables, they have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution of SLPs in each type of facility within ASHA. All other results, including the number of respondents (*n*) shown, are unweighted.

Of the original 4,000 SLPs in the sample, 11 were retired, 22 had undeliverable mailing addresses, 18 were not employed in the field, and 169 were employed in other types of facilities, leaving 3,780 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 2,064, resulting in a 54.6% response rate.

**Suggested
Citation**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2009). *ASHA SLP Health Care Survey: Trends related to private practice owners, 2005–2009*. Available from www.asha.org.

**Additional
Information**

For additional information regarding the 2009 SLP Health Care Survey, please contact Amy Hasselkus, Associate Director of Health Care Services, at 800-498-2071, ext. 5686, ahasselkus@asha.org, or Janet Brown, Director of Health Care Services, at ext. 5679, jbrown@asha.org. To learn more about resources for ASHA members working in health care, visit ASHA’s Web site at www.asha.org/slp/healthcare/default.

Thank You

Without the generous cooperation of the members who participate in our surveys, ASHA could not fulfill its mission to provide vital information about the professions and discipline to the Association membership and public. Thank you!