

The September Review

Our lead article this month discusses two highly robust entities: health care and the Big Apple. For some years now, employment in health care industries in the United States has grown more rapidly than overall employment. In New York City, the same pattern has held. From 1990 through 2008, as noted by BLS economist Martin Kohli, health care employment grew by almost 42 percent, compared with 6.4 percent for total employment. In fact, during that period health care industries accounted for more than half of the quarter million jobs gained in the New York metropolitan area. This marked growth largely reflected an increase in the elderly population, a large supply of workers, and growing use of home health care; the latter industry, notably, “was the real jobs machine in New York City for years 2002 through 2008, adding more than 24,700 jobs.”

The MLR has published a number of articles with a regional flavor. We continue the pattern this month with a focus on employment growth in the Kansas City metropolitan area, courtesy of BLS economists Jacqueline Michael-Midkiff, Linda Nickisch, and Cassandra Yocum. Over the past couple of decades, the authors report, there was a noteworthy narrowing of the gap between the higher level of employment on the Missouri side of the

Kansas City metropolitan area and the lower level of employment on the Kansas side. (The Metropolitan Statistical Area, or MSA, definition of the Kansas City area is nine counties in Missouri and six in Kansas.) Leading the shift was robust jobs growth in the Kansas county of Johnson, which over the period was responsible for more than 90 percent of the growth in the Kansas portion of the area. Johnson County still ranks second to Jackson County, Missouri, in total employment in the MSA, but it added the largest number of jobs from 1990 to 2007.

In the winter of 1959–60, according to BLS economist John F. Buckley, BLS conducted its first survey specifically designed to compare salaries of white-collar workers in private industry with the salaries established in the Federal General Schedule grade levels that covered a large majority of Federal white-collar workers. That survey, undertaken at the behest of the forerunners of today’s Office of Management and Budget and Office of Personnel Management, was the Bureau’s first to be used in the Federal pay-setting process. The history of BLS’ contributions to that process is described in the article “Fifty Years of BLS surveys on Federal employees’ pay,” which rounds out this issue. The agency, as Buckley concludes, continues to work with “the Federal pay community to carry out its commitment to produce accurate and

timely data for policymakers and other users. The wage and salary information that the BLS collects is part of its broader measures of compensation that includes detailed information on employee nonwage benefits.”

2008 Klein Awards

The Trustees of the Lawrence R. Klein Award announced the winners of the 2008 awards. This year one BLS-authored Monthly Labor Review article was recognized, “Business Processes and Business Functions: a new way of looking at employment.” This article, by Sharon P. Brown, appeared in our December 2008 issue. Among authors contributing submissions from outside of BLS, Wen-Jui Han, Christopher J. Ruhm, Jane Waldfogel, and Elizabeth Washbrook were recognized for “The timing of mothers’ employment after childbirth,” which was published in the June issue.

Each year since 1969, the Lawrence R. Klein Award has honored the best articles appearing in the Review. The award was established in honor of Lawrence R. Klein, who retired in 1968 after 22 years as editor-in-chief of the Review and established a fund to encourage articles that (1) exhibit originality of ideas or methods or analysis, (2) adhere to the principles of scientific inquiry, and (3) are well written. □