



April 2010

## Onboarding New Physician Hires – Is Your Plan in Place?

Onboarding is the process that starts at the first contact with a potential new hire, in which you build and establish engagement early in the hiring process and continues after the traditional orientation program ends.

There are important benefits from the successful onboarding of new physician hires:

- The physician will become financially viable sooner, with greater job satisfaction and will contribute to your organization in a more meaningful way.
- When integrated into your general community and medical community in an organized manner, the physician and his or her family will feel welcomed and connected. Strong integration validates membership in the medical community and establishes referral patterns sooner.
- The more quickly the new physician is and feels an integral "part" of the community, the better the intangible "happy doctor" factor and improved odds for long-term retention. Your organization will reap financial benefit in earlier productivity, reduced turnover and associated recruitment costs.

### Pre-Offer Stage

Onboarding begins at the earliest stages of recruitment. Known as the "pre-offer" stage, your first contact with interested candidates sets the tone for all future communications. After determining mutual interest, your conversation should inform the physician of your culture, mission, expectations and responsibilities of the position. Subsequent conversations regarding compensation, revenue management, and productivity expectations should be clear and collaborative. These conversations usually take place during the on-site interview and may continue with post interview telephone conversations.

### Offer Stage

When the process moves to the stage of an offer to the physician, the act of engagement takes on a more collaborative role. Clear, direct communications regarding practice specifics and contract negotiations establishes your working relationship. Now is the time to discuss practice management and policies, marketing plans, and productivity standards. Make sure the contract offered honestly reflects your communications about this position so there are no surprises to the physician.

This stage is also an excellent time to formalize the physician mentor relationship. Assign a physician mentor to your candidate before he or she signs the contract. Begin this "connection" process early, and the physician will know his or her importance to your organization. The power of relationships in workplace satisfaction and successful integration to a new work setting cannot be overstated.

Also involve the candidate at this time in the early beginnings of the next phase of the onboarding process, the Integration Phase. Begin talks about the steps the physician can or must take to ensure success in the new position. At this time, briefly begin discussing marketing plans, timely applications for licenses and insurance panels, physician receptions and the physician orientation program.

### Integration Stage

Once your candidate signs the contract with an anticipated start date, the onboarding plan enters the integration stage. Assimilating new physicians into the community at large and the medical community takes careful planning. If your candidate is relocating, pay careful attention to real estate and relocation issues to ensure a smooth transition. Be prepared to offer support and information to the physician's

spouse and family regarding job opportunities and schools. Consider enlisting another physician's family to act as ambassadors. Having someone to follow up on these details may make the difference between a happy doctor and an unhappy one.

As the start date approaches, be sure to have your orientation program in place. Include introductions to physicians on the medical staff, administration, and service line directors. Schedule ongoing physician mentor meetings and check in with your new physician at regular intervals. Ensure that any promises made have been kept or plans discussed have been implemented. Seek the new physician's input regarding the process and the progress of integration. Encourage open dialogue at any time and meet with your new physician at 30, 60 and 90 days and again at 180 days. Listen to him or her and take the opportunity to improve your best practices based on the feedback you receive. And after a year, even if done informally, celebrate your mutual first anniversary!

If you would like more information about onboarding new physicians, please contact us.

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## **Top 10 Reasons to Recruit a 2011 Resident or Fellow Now!**

If you are recruiting a physician to your practice, are you considering 2011 candidates? Even though they have yet to finish training, a 2011 resident or fellow could be a great addition to your practice. Here are 10 reasons you should work with 2011s now:

1. You will have early access to the best and brightest candidates and you will have less competition by acting now.
2. Many residents and fellows prefer to commit to a practice early. During their last year, most want to concentrate on their training, not their job search.
3. In this changing economic climate, hiring a 2011 candidate provides him or her with plenty of time to sell or buy a home and prepare for the move.
4. Delays can be costly if you only focus on recruiting physicians who are available now and you are unsuccessful in signing a new physician.
5. By signing a physician early, you have a full year to build relationships, convey your corporate culture, and market your new associate to referral sources and the community at large.
6. Making a commitment early allows your new associate to make timely applications for licenses, staff privileges and insurance panels.
7. Graduating residents and fellows can sometimes serve as a temporary work source as they often enjoy moonlighting.
8. Since most physicians' spouses or partners are career driven, an early contract would provide him or her more time to locate an ideal position in your area.
9. You will succeed in fulfilling your 2011 recruitment goal early and can devote your time to other important practice development strategies and activities.
10. Your competition may already be working with these candidates. Ensure your recruitment success by working with 2011 physicians now!

For assistance in determining the availability of 2011 residents or fellows by specialty or in recruiting a 2011 resident or fellow, please contact us.

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## **Locate a Physician on Your Own? Or Through a Locum Tenens Firm?**

One of your internists has informed you that he or she will be taking a six week sabbatical. Ideally, you would like to find a physician to provide temporary coverage on your own, but you're not sure where to begin or what all the process entails. Frankly, it's quite involved!

First comes the easy part: determine the timeframe for which you will need coverage and the call schedule.

Next, identify and locate physicians who meet your skill and procedure requirements and contact them to determine their interest and availability. Even though the number of locum tenens physicians is increasing, do you know how and where to find them? Other physicians in your group may have colleagues they can contact to get the word out, but if that is unsuccessful, you will need to begin cold calling physicians. You will need to describe the opportunity, answer questions from the prospective candidates and be prepared to ask pertinent questions about any possible licensing issues or any history of malpractice.

At the point you have identified a locum physician candidate, it is necessary to conduct further due diligence, which is also quite involved. Completing due diligence means you:

- Verify all state licenses and DEA information
- Verify medical school and training
- Obtain references and background checks
- Obtain National Practitioner Data Bank Report
- Determine any Medicare or Medicaid eligibility issues
- Verify eligibility for and obtain malpractice insurance

After due diligence is completed, you will need to make the necessary arrangements for air travel, lodging and a rental car if the physician is from out of town. You will also need to complete and process the myriad of paperwork to temporarily add the physician to your payroll system.

As you can see, identifying, getting a commitment from, verifying and making arrangements for locum tenens physicians involves detailed, time sensitive and time consuming tasks. Do you have adequate time or resources to identify and contact, screen and conduct comprehensive interviews with the number of physicians it might take to find even ONE who meets your criteria AND is available when you need them? And to then accomplish everything else that needs to be done?

If not, it is good to know that locum tenens firms have staff members whose only responsibility is to complete this entire process in a timely manner. In fact, they do this day in and day out, and you can set the entire process in motion with just one phone call.

Developing a good working relationship with a locum tenens firm that has high ethical standards can be a huge benefit to an organization. Reputable locum tenens firms already have a pool of physicians with a variety of experience, training and skills. They will compile all the documentation for you along with written and verbal references attesting to the physician's clinical skills, clinical knowledge, staff and patient rapport and work ethic. They will conduct the due diligence and handle all the details, and present to you only those physicians who meet your requirements. Plus, they pay the physician directly.

The next time you have a physician away for vacation, CME or a sabbatical, save your valuable time by contacting a locum tenens firm to provide the necessary coverage. Please contact us to learn how we can assist you in providing the right locum tenens physician(s) for your needs.

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## Compensation Corner:

### Occupational/Environmental Medicine

2009 National Mean \$207,000

By Geographic Region:

East	\$193,000
West	\$231,000
South	\$196,000
Midwest	\$204,000

**Podiatry (General)**

2009 National Mean \$197,000

By Geographic Region:

East	\$175,000
West	\$214,000
South	\$201,000
Midwest	\$209,000

**Chiropractor**

2009 National Mean \$113,000

**Social Worker**

2009 National Mean \$62,000

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