



Physician Recruiting: Standing Out in a Crowd



Urgent care is growing by hundreds of centers each year, and available physicians are declining with equal speed. Urgent care training is variable, at best, and urgent care experience is hard to find. Expanding health systems with their in-house recruiters and high visibility are tightening the squeeze.

All told, it's a recipe for unfilled positions and staff burnout.

Whether you are looking to expand locations, add providers, or replace departing ones, you are bound to be faced with the formidable task of recruiting.

Successful recruiting can be a real difference-maker for a practice. It supports practice growth, improves staff morale, and allows leaders to focus their attention on other areas of practice improvement. Failure can lead to lost revenue, missed opportunities and high turnover. Successful recruiting requires an appreciation and application of a few key principles that start with identifying and interviewing viable candidates.

Identify

Reaching candidates can be challenging. Physicians are flooded with direct mail, and vying for their attention requires persistence and volume. You cannot afford otherwise. Remember, they don't even know you exist, so before you can sell them on the virtues of your practice, you must reach them.

- Post on job boards (such as those hosted by UCAOA at <http://jobs.ucaoa.org/post.cfm>, and by PracticeLink at www.practicelink.com, etc).
- Include a jobs link on your site.
- Advertise in journals. Remember, persistence pays.
- Direct mail still works. You can target by specialty and region. Lists are available through associations (UCAOA, AAFP, AMA) and through one of many list rental firms.
- Try social networking; young physicians use this readily.
- Mentor residents. This gives you an opportunity to recruit and train at the same time.
- Network with your colleagues. Many of them are looking to transition their careers.
- Work with recruiters, but bear in mind that this is a mixed bag. They can certainly bring a number of candidates to the table, but they are not always the best candidates. They are

expensive (\$20,000 per placement, on average). Additionally, while they do relieve the burden of identifying candidates, they should not be relied on too much to sell the opportunity.

Interview

This is your opportunity to seal the deal and align expectations.

- Once you have identified some candidates, respond to their inquiries immediately! If you wait much more than one or two days to respond, your chances of closing the deal on a good candidate drop considerably.
- Unless you are an extremely large network, phone calls should be handled by a lead physician with a vested interest in the practice. Be prepared when you call. You should be able to spend 30 to 45 minutes describing the opportunity.
- Ask lots of open-ended questions to get a feel for what the candidate is looking for, what interests them. Try and understand what the candidate's expectations are. This will save everyone valuable time if it is determined that expectations are not aligned.
- Finish the interview by addressing how your opportunity can meet the professional and practice goals identified in the call. If you like the candidate, discuss an on-site visit on the first call. Plan their visit around interests (personal and professional) identified in the phone interview.

Don't forget to have fun! If you don't enjoy recruiting, have someone else do it. Your goal is to make the candidate feel wanted. They need to feel like they belong with your group.

And finally, make recruiting a priority. You need the best candidates who are the best fit for your practice. A "mis-hire" is worse than a "missed hire." ■

Lee A. Resnick, MD
Editor-in-Chief
JUCM, The Journal of Urgent Care Medicine