



PHYSICIANS – ADVICE FOR DOCTORS

7 Things to Consider When Using a Physician Recruiter



Emily Paulsen 📅 February 7, 2020 ⌚ 5 min read

Using a physician recruiter can help you land your dream job. Here's how to avoid pitfalls and find the right opportunity for you.

If you're a physician looking for a job, you've probably figured out you're in high demand — most physicians in their final year of residency have an inbox overflowing with solicitations from medical recruiters. Two-thirds of final-year residents receive more than 51 solicitations, according to [Staffing Industry Analysts \(SIA\)](#), and nearly half get more than 100. Using a physician recruiter might seem like the obvious choice.

Medical recruitment is big business. [SIA](#) reports the market pulls in more than \$17 billion a year, and you're the prized commodity. According to [MarketWatch](#), analysts predict continued growth in medical recruitment, perhaps as more people get access to health insurance, the population ages and the nation experiences ongoing shortages of healthcare professionals, especially physicians. Needs are

the process. But how do you identify the recruiters you want to work with? Here are seven points to consider before using a physician recruiter to find your next job.

1. Type of Recruiter

Some physician recruiters are employed by a hospital or health system to recruit specifically for their facilities and usually focus on long-term positions. But most healthcare organizations also turn to third-party agencies to help with recruitment, especially when it comes to short-term needs.

Others work on a more speculative, contingency basis, pulling a fee only if their candidate gets the job. Third-party staffing agencies hire physicians and other healthcare professionals who they then “lease” to a hospital or other organization.

Knowing who the recruiter represents and how they are being compensated can help you decide whether you want to work with that recruiter or size up a potential offer.

2. Specialties in High Demand

While demand remains high for primary care and hospital-based jobs, recruiters are on the hunt for other specialties to work in private practices and other organizations, too: Only about 50% of placements made by physician recruiters are in hospitals, [MD News](#) reports. In 2018, the [American Medical Association](#) spoke with the executive vice president of Merritt Hawkins, a healthcare recruiting firm. They reported the most requests for specialists in family medicine, psychiatry, internal medicine, radiology and OB-GYN.

3. Varying Commitment Lengths

Most hospital-based recruiters are looking for long-term, full-time physicians for their organizations. If you’re looking for short-term or part-time work — maybe even a moonlighting position — a third-party staffing agency may offer more opportunities, with some specialties more in demand than others. Hospitals and healthcare organizations turn to staffing agencies for hospitalists, emergency room physicians and anesthesiologists on a short-term or part-time basis to fill shifts so they don’t have to hire another full-time physician.

be sure to get as many specifics as you can upfront to make sure the work will fit your schedule.

4. Surprise Billing

Surprise billing — when patients receive an unexpected bill for an out-of-network physician at an in-network hospital — has been in the news lately, and a [study at Yale University](#) found that these bills may result from the use of third-party staffing agencies. While the hospital or healthcare organization may be “in-network,” the doctors supplied by a third-party staffing agency may not be, and the financial arrangements among all the parties (you, the healthcare organization and the agency) can end up negatively affecting your patient relationships.

5. Contract Language

Ask questions if you don't understand the contract jargon, and get a lawyer with healthcare experience to look at it, too. Some specifics you should understand include: What is the length and nature of the commitment? Does the contract clearly delineate expectations and responsibilities of all parties? What is the cancellation policy? Does the contract include a noncompete clause that will limit your future opportunities?

6. Legal Regulations

According to the law firm [Weiss Zarett Brofman Sonnenklar and Levy](#), federal and state laws regulate financial relationships between physicians and vendors, including third-party staffing agencies and recruiters. Be especially wary of compensation based on services rendered or fees that seem too high or too low. In addition, any agency that has access to private patient information must sign a HIPAA business associate agreement.

7. Health Insurance and Other Benefits

Depending on the employer and the employment arrangement, you may be considered an independent contractor, and generally, ICs do not have access to benefits like health insurance or 401(k). If you don't, you'll have to take care of these on your own. Don't forget to ask about medical liability insurance, too. Find out what kind of policy it is, any limitations and who's picking up the tab. No matter

tips in mind will help you avoid any nightmares along the way.

Job Search



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Emily Paulsen writes about health and healthcare topics for consumers as well as healthcare professionals and administrators. Her special interests include patient education, health information technology, health disparities, workforce development, and improving the healthcare experience for patients and professionals alike. She has experience developing articles, fact sheets, toolkits, case studies, reports, research summaries, and continuing medical education materials. Her clients include trade publications, health organizations, non-profits, and government agencies.

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