

Guest Column: New Survey Reflects a Flexible Physician Workforce

By Kurt Mosley

Nearly 90% of health care facilities used locum tenens physicians and/or advanced practice professionals to fill gaps in their staffs last year, according to a new survey from WHA gold-level corporate member AMN Healthcare's Locum Tenens division, formerly known as Staff Care.

The company's 2022 *Survey of Locum Tenens Staffing Trends* indicates that 88% of hospitals, medical groups and other health care facilities used locum tenens physicians, nurse practitioners (NPs) and/or physician assistants (PAs) sometime in the prior 12 months, primarily to address staffing shortages. The survey suggests that physicians are part of an increasingly flexible health care workforce that can deliver care when and where they are needed most.

COVID-19 Driving Use of Locum Tenens Providers

Anesthesia providers, including anesthesiologists and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), were the most utilized type of locum tenens health care professionals last year, the survey indicates, suggesting that procedures requiring anesthesia have rebounded from COVID-19 related lows. Hospitalists were the second most utilized type of locum tenens provider, perhaps due to the large volume of hospital inpatient work created by COVID-19. Psychiatrists were third on the list, as COVID-19 has increased the incidence of mental health problems nationwide and has highlighted the dearth of behavioral health professionals that preceded the pandemic.

Health Facilities Taking Steps to Address Staffing Shortages

The survey asked hospital and medical group managers to indicate what their facilities are doing to address staffing shortages. The majority (54%) said they are adding new incentives, such as signing bonuses, to their recruiting packages. An additional 49% are implementing new retention efforts, including offering retention bonuses to providers. Forty-three percent are adding temporary staff while 35% are expanding telehealth services.

AMN Healthcare's 2022 *Survey of Locum Tenens Staffing Trends* (formerly conducted by Staff Care, a division of AMN Healthcare) is based on responses from 202 hospital, medical group and other health care facility managers. Contact [Kurt Mosley](#) for a copy of the complete survey report.

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