



## Survey: Physicians Turning to Locum Tenens to Improve Work Conditions, Relieve Burnout

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### Many Would Return to Permanent Positions If Conditions Right

DALLAS, April 23, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Physicians and advanced practice professionals are opting for the flexibility of temporary, "locum tenens" work in order to improve job conditions and address feelings of burnout, according to a new survey by AMN Healthcare, the nation's leading healthcare workforce solutions company.

Latin for "to hold a place," locum tenens refers to physicians and other clinicians who work on temporary assignments that can range from a few days to up to a year. The survey asked physicians, nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) who recently have worked as locum tenens why they do so. The number one reason, cited by 86% of those surveyed, was to obtain a better work schedule. The second reason, cited by 80%, was to address feelings of burnout.

"During the COVID pandemic, healthcare professionals began to rethink how, when and where they work," said Jeff Decker, President of AMN Healthcare's Physician Solutions division. "Locum tenens offer relief from the long, inflexible work hours and onerous bureaucratic duties that often cause dissatisfaction and burnout among physicians and other healthcare providers. Locum tenens providers also offer staffing flexibility for hospitals and other healthcare facilities."

Close to half of those surveyed (47%) said that locum tenens work is more satisfying than working in a permanent position, while only 12% said that a permanent position is more satisfying than locum tenens. Ninety-five percent rated their morale level working locum tenens is either high or moderate, while only 5% rated their morale level as low.

### Schedule Flexibility a Key for Today's Healthcare Providers

Despite their relatively positive feelings about locum tenens, the survey indicates that many physicians, NPs and PAs would return to permanent positions if conditions were right. Forty-five percent of those surveyed said they would stop working locum tenens and return to a permanent position if schedules, compensation and other practice conditions were favorable, while a similar number (43%) said they would stick to locum tenens.

"Many physicians and other healthcare professionals feel they are being pushed from permanent positions by unsatisfactory work conditions," Decker said. "To get them back, employers should offer practice conditions that appeal to today's providers."

Increasingly, this means schedule flexibility, according to Decker. Virtually all of those surveyed (97%) rated "freedom/flexibility" as a most rewarding or moderately rewarding aspect of locum tenens. The survey indicates that 52% of locum tenens physicians, NPs and PAs are women, who often seek schedule flexibility and work/life balance due to their dual roles as professionals and family caregivers.

"The one-size-fits-all practice model has less appeal to physicians and other healthcare providers today," Decker said. "Many are seeking practices tailored to their specific professional interests and personal needs."

### An Earlier Career Choice

The survey suggests that physicians, NPs and PAs are choosing to work locum tenens earlier in their careers. The majority of those surveyed (81%) said they began working locum tenens either right out of training or in mid-career, while 19% said they began working locum tenens after retiring from full-time positions. In 2016, by contrast, only 64% of those surveyed began working locum tenens right after training or in mid-career, while 36% began after retirement.

"Locum tenens is no longer an alternative just for healthcare providers in the twilight of their careers," Decker said. "Younger providers are working locum tenens as a way to 'test drive' practice settings or to opt out of practice environments that don't meet their needs."

According to Decker, the number of physicians working locum tenens annually is growing, from an estimated 26,000 in 2002 to over 52,000 today, reflecting an increasing diversity of practice styles.

"Whether it's full-time work, part-time, shared practices, telemedicine, urgent care, locum tenens, or other options, healthcare providers today have a variety of practice styles to choose from, which contributes to more access to quality care for patients," Decker said.

AMN Healthcare's *2024 Survey of Locum Tenens Physicians and Advanced Practitioners* is based on responses from 589 physicians, NPs and APs who have worked locum tenens in the last 18 months and has a margin of error of +/- 4%. The survey report can be accessed at [https://www.amnhealthcare.com/siteassets/amn-insights/blog/physician/2024-survey-of-locum-tenens-physicians-and-ap-professionals.pdf?utm\\_source=Whitepaper&utm\\_medium=Content&utm\\_campaign=2024\\_Locums\\_Tenens\\_Survey\\_Pressrelease&LO=Content\\_Survey](https://www.amnhealthcare.com/siteassets/amn-insights/blog/physician/2024-survey-of-locum-tenens-physicians-and-ap-professionals.pdf?utm_source=Whitepaper&utm_medium=Content&utm_campaign=2024_Locums_Tenens_Survey_Pressrelease&LO=Content_Survey)

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