Life on the Road: Experiences in Locum Dosimetry

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Disclosures
Learning Objectives

- Learn about alternate types of dosimetry employment
- Discover ways to improve interpersonal workplace relationships
- See how locum dosimetry employment can alter the clinic dynamics

About Me

- Robert Morris University, 2012
  — B.S. Nuclear Medicine Technology
About Me

• Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center, 2013
  – Medical Dosimetry

About Me

• Alaska Cancer Treatment Center in Anchorage, AK since 2016
About Me

• AAMD
  • Volunteer since 2013 on various committees
  • Communications Committee Co-Chair since 2015
    • #AAMD2018

Audience

• Those who are curious in doing Locums
• Those who can share experience doing locums- please comment at end on your experiences
• Those who have no desire to, but can relate to workplace environments
  – That “New person in Dosimetry”
What is it

- Locum Tenens: “one filling an office for a time or temporarily taking the place of another”
  *Merriam-Webster*
Why am I talking about this

• Not to talk you into it
• I am passionate about it and our field
• I get many questions at meetings and in life re: locum & remote work
• Not just a job description, but is a lifestyle
What types of assignments are available?

- Vacation - short
- Maternity - long
- Lapse in employment
- Some remote work
- Testing out possible perm
- Busy season help

Common Questions

- How long are assignments?
- How much time off?
- How do you know where you will go?
- Can a recent grad work assignments?
- Is overtime permitted?
- What benefits are provided?
How to get started

- Direct contact
- Blind personal marketing
- Recruiters

Recruiters

- Best source for jobs
- Help you apply
- Will set up interview
- Will make offer for their client
- Set up travel, housing, transportation, per diem
- Paperwork, drug testing, Vaccinations, Physical, contracts
Interview Process

- Phone Call to site
- Review of Software and Hardware
- Explanation of Duties
- Overview of office staffing
- Chance to direct questions to MDs & RTTs

Typical locum job reality

- Busy
- Behind
- Long hours (OT $)
- Low quality of work
Expectations

• Knowledge of Software
  – Honesty of skills on resume
• Self-Starter
• Trust takes time to build

Expenses

• Local Contract
• Distance Contract
  – Travel
  – Car
  – Lodging
  – Per diem (non-taxable)
Locations
• Follow hard to recruit and population bases
• Random

Time Off
• NO Pay
• As much as you want or don’t want
• Move time off according to job schedules
• Hard to take days off when staffed
  – You are there to work
  – Clinics are usually busy or in ‘crisis mode’
Remote Locum

• Becoming more common for short term assignments
• Sometimes used to cover days to weeks off
• Can be used to help when clinic gets busy
• Sometimes remote coverage is used after an on-site assignment

Compensation

• All-inclusive
• Hourly rate plus travel & per diem
• Overtime
• Per plan
Benefits

– Few
– Some after a period of time with the company/recruiter

Benefits

• Non-monetary
  – Friendships
  – Contacts
  – Business Relationships
  – Tips/Tricks
Lifestyle

• Can be 100% travel
• Some keep residence
• Minimal Living

Success as a Locum Dosimetrist

• BE OPEN
  – Able to go anywhere
  – Flexible with dates
• Venture beyond your comfort zone
  – Take a risk you normally wouldn’t take
  – See a difficult contract as a challenge
Be flexible

- Will be more appealing
- Will have steadier work

Have an outgoing personality

- Enjoy being social with new people and your experience will be more rewarding
- Opens doors to local culture and experiences
- Those in the department who may be hard to work with may start to open up
Say YES to your recruiter

• You’ll be their go-to dosimetrist
• You’ll build a good relationship
• Contracts will come to you

Software Experience

• Best to be knowledgeable with many tx planning systems
• Understand many methods of treatment planning to suit center’s needs
• Be open to what site wants not what you want
Temp-to-Perm

• Gives employer and client a working trial
• No hard feelings if it isn’t a good fit
• Allows employer to see your worth
• Problems in the workplace can be seen before committing

Life on the road

• Hotels
• House Rentals
• Rental Cars
• Per diem
My Experiences

• Long-Term Locums
• Short-term locums
• Repeat jobs
• Remote locum dosimetry

Your first day

• Expectations
• Learning Curve
• Training
• Honesty
Your purpose

• Get the work done!

Locations I’ve Worked
and Places I’ve Been
Anchorage, AK

Sequoia National Park
Santa Monica & Malibu, CA

Alaska Pipeline
International Ice Carving Championships

Kenai Peninsula, AK
Lake Tahoe

Yosemite National Park
Santa Cruz, CA

Barrow, AK
Ventura Beach, CA

Denali National Park
Back to Alaska

• Time to settle down
• Used locum work to find a job that fit me
• Signed a contract since company was paying off recruiter
  — Usually one year the recruiter can take commission

What have I learned/ what could you learn (professional)

• Every office is different
  — Rad Oncs get a mindset what they do is the only way
  — Small details are always changing
• Market your abilities and you will go far
• Keep an open Mind
What have I learned/ what could you learn (personal)

- Regions in the United States are very different
- Be open to many personalities at work
  - RTTs/Physicists who feel they need to be firm with you until they build your trust
- When you are on-site for a short time, be prepared to be alone
- Don’t get too caught up with work to forget your Mother’s Birthday

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