



Practice Coverage Strategies

Practice coverage is one of the main approaches to retaining and recruiting physicians. Practice coverage can range from cross coverage to "external" locum coverage. Both enable physicians to a leave for vacation, continuing medical education, illness, etc.).

There are many ways to implement practice coverage including engaging physicians to serve as a locum in their own community (cross-coverage or "internal" locums), and engaging "external" locums, such as new graduates, who are keen to trial a variety of communities and practices before committing to a permanent location.

The following list describes other strategies to engage in practice coverage.

<i>When you engage in this strategy ...</i>	<i>Consider using these tactics ...</i>
Conduct a needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what the local coverage and locum needs are over the next year • Look at the whole physician resource/manpower question (how many physicians are needed in your community) • Ask division members asking them about their interest in practice coverage. • Hold a meeting (e.g. focus group) for division members to understand experiences (including challenges and successes) with getting a locum • Use the results to develop a plan and promotional materials about what is available in the area



<i>When you engage in this strategy ...</i>	<i>Consider using these tactics ...</i>
Promote coverage opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote opportunities you've identified in your community by using:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Word of mouth– Locums sites– Conferences– Residency programs– Your division's website• Remember that locums are potential sources of permanent physicians• Show the community as a locum friendly one<ul style="list-style-type: none">– identify a main contact person (e.g. Recruitment Coordinator)• Develop a locum package electronically and in print that has a list of specific clinics, community resources etc., so when a physician comes into the community for a locum he/she can feel connected and included• Include a locum matching forum integrated into your website that your members can use• Establish a connection with your local university's Family Medicine Residency Program so that you can promote coverage opportunities to soon to be grads (many graduates tend to work in the communities in which they provide coverage); encourage the university to post locum opportunities
Target retiring physicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target physicians who are semi retired or retired to determine if they are interested in doing locum work• Target physicians with a full or part time practice and who are also interested in helping cover practicing physicians.