

## Staff Care Survey: 77 Percent of Hospitals Report Using Physician 'Temps'

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### Temporary Primary Care Doctors in Greatest Demand

IRVING, Texas, March 31 /PRNewswire/ -- Physician "temps" -- or locum tenens as they are known in Latin -- are now used by the majority of hospitals in the U.S., a new survey indicates.

Conducted by Staff Care, the nation's largest temporary physician staffing company, the survey looks at the use of locum tenens physicians at 730 hospitals and medical groups. Over three-quarters of those surveyed said their facilities had used locum tenens physicians within the last 12 months, while 54 percent said their facilities currently are seeking locum tenens physicians. Hospitals and other healthcare organizations typically use locum tenens physicians to fill in when there are gaps in the permanent staff, the survey indicates.

"Locum tenens doctors are the Lone Rangers of medicine," notes Joseph Caldwell, president of Staff Care. "They ride into town, take care of people in need, then they ride off to their next assignment."

According to Caldwell, locum tenens physicians work temporary assignments that can last from a few days up to a year. Some locum tenens physicians may work just one or two temporary assignments a year, while others may work a dozen assignments or more, Caldwell says.

Demand grows by over 20%

The survey also tracked which types of doctors are in most demand as temps based on the kind of temporary physicians Staff Care's clients requested in 2007. Primary care physicians (i.e., family practitioners, general internists and pediatricians) topped the list of the most requested medical specialties, followed by anesthesia providers, behavioral health professionals, radiologists and surgeons. In 2007, the number of requests Staff Care received to fill temporary "physician days" increased by over 20 percent over 2006. According to Caldwell, demand for temporary physicians is being driven by a national doctor shortage, which has left gaps in the permanent staffs of many hospitals and medical groups.

Quality of care

The survey asked hospital and medical group managers to assess the general skill level of locum tenens physicians. Seventy-six percent of those surveyed rated the skill level of locum tenens physicians as either "good" or "excellent," while 22 percent rated their skill level as "adequate." Only two percent of those surveyed rated the skill level of locum tenens physicians as "unsatisfactory."

In the same survey, Staff Care asked over 800 physicians who work as temps about their temporary work experiences. Nineteen percent said they find locum tenens to be more satisfying than permanent practice, 14 percent find locum tenens to be less satisfying than permanent practice, while the majority (67 percent) find locum tenens and permanent practice to be equally satisfying.

A copy of Staff Care's 2008 Review of Temporary Physician Staffing Trends can be found at <http://www.staffcare.com>.

About Staff Care

Staff Care is the largest temporary physician staffing company in the United States. Staff Care provides temporary, independent contractor physicians in all specialties, as well as temporary certified registered nurse anesthetists, to hospitals, medical groups, government facilities, and other health care organizations. Staff Care is a division of AMN Healthcare, the largest healthcare staffing company in the United States.