



CompHealth®

A physician's guide to working as an independent contractor



A physician's guide to working as an independent contractor

When physicians take **locum tenens assignments**, they typically work as **independent contractors**. What does that entail, and how can you make it work for your situation? Whether you're interested in one weekend a month or want to work locum tenens full time, this physician's guide to working as an independent contractor can help you get started.



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What is locum tenens?

A Latin term meaning “holding the place,” a **locum tenens** provider is a healthcare professional (physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner) who temporarily takes another healthcare provider’s position or fills in where there is a need for additional care. Though some locum tenens assignments require only one shift, others can last several months.



COMPHEALTH - LOCUM TENENS INTRODUCTION

EXPLORE FURTHER

Learn about the history of locum tenens

What do locum tenens physicians do?

Locum tenens physicians of nearly every medical specialty and subspecialty provide care to patients who otherwise would not receive it. Though each assignment differs in length and scope, these healthcare providers generally provide care in the same way they do in their current or previous private practice, clinic, or hospital job.

However, locum tenens physicians are typically not required to participate in bureaucratic tasks like committees and meetings, reducing their administrative burden.

PART

1

Getting
started with
locum tenens

Why do physicians work locum tenens?

Many physicians take **locum tenens assignments to supplement their income** while still working full time at their practice. Others work **locum tenens right out of residency** or a fellowship to get a feel for the types of work they like best. Some healthcare providers use **locum tenens jobs to ease the transition into retirement**, and some take these assignments so they can live closer to care for an aging parent or grandparent.

While the reasons for choosing locum tenens work vary, physicians agree that locum tenens assignments allow them to enjoy a change of pace and meet new patients and colleagues. For many, **locum tenens offers a more flexible schedule**.



WHY DR. SLOAN WORKS LOCUM TENENS

DIG DEEPER
How does locum tenens work?

REASONS PHYSICIANS WORK LOCUM TENENS

Who benefits from locum tenens?

Many people benefit from locum tenens, not just the physician. Locum tenens allows people throughout the country to receive care, including those living in underserved and rural areas. Physicians who work locum tenens also help provide uninterrupted coverage so other physicians can take medical leave or vacations.

There are quite a few locum doctors who've chosen locum tenens work to give back in rural, underserved communities. Hear from one experienced locum about his commitment to giving back:



MAKING A DIFFERENCE AS A LOCUM WITH DR. PATEL



Tanzania Medical Trip 2024

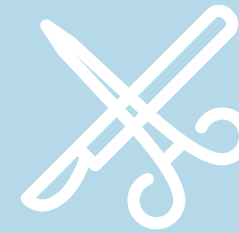


Reasons physicians work locum tenens



Supplemental income

Locums is a great way to supplement your full-time salary or earn more on average. Many assignments pay higher rates than permanent positions.



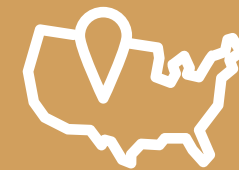
Expand your skill set

Locums offers a variety of healthcare settings, so you gain valuable experiences with new systems, equipment, and patient populations to develop a broader skill set.



Enjoy more flexibility

You choose when and where you want to work. You have more control over your schedule and more freedom to do the things you love with those you want to spend the extra time with.



Travel the country

By tying your locum tenens assignments to travel destinations, hobbies, and activities, you open yourself to lifestyle opportunities you might never have had.



Rediscover the joy of medicine

Locum tenens is perfectly suited to battling burnout and helping doctors find the satisfaction that comes from putting the focus back on patients.



Try before you sign

A number of residents, fellows, and mid-career doctors use locum tenens to ensure the practices that interest them are actually a great fit before making a long-term commitment.

How do I get started working locums?

If you want to get started, it's easy to get in touch with a recruiter at CompHealth. Here are the first three steps to finding your first assignment:

STEP 1

It starts with a phone call, **submitting your information on a contact form**, or signing up for our **MyCompHealth portal**. From there, we'll take the time to get to know you and what you're looking for in an assignment.

STEP 2

Your recruiter will share locums assignments with you that match what you're looking for. You'll have the ability to review and consider each one. You choose the one that's just right for you.

STEP 3

Your recruiter will walk you through filling out our online application. They'll also assist you with gathering any required supporting documentation.



Employed physicians report to work on a rigid schedule. For example, when I was in private practice, vacation requests were not honored unless submitted six months in advance. Locum tenens offers physicians a rare opportunity to achieve work-life balance.

– Dr. Andrew Wilner, Neurology



What other options are available for a physician independent contractor?

Locum tenens isn't the only way to earn extra money as a physician independent contractor. It often goes hand-in-hand with other part-time employment options you may already be familiar with.



Moonlighting

While the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, moonlighting and locum tenens are not the same thing. Moonlighting refers to any secondary job a healthcare provider takes in addition to their regular position. Most doctors moonlight by picking up extra shifts at local hospitals, often with irregular or nighttime hours (hence the term "moonlighting").



Per diem

You've probably heard the term per diem used to describe living expenses, as it is Latin for "per day." Similarly, per diem jobs or PRN ("pro re nata") work are temporary agreements between a doctor and a hospital (a staffing agency is not involved). While locum tenens assignments have a set starting and ending date, per diem jobs do not have a fixed schedule, so doctors can work extra shifts whenever available.

Per diem work typically doesn't come with the benefits of locum tenens work, such as malpractice coverage, housing, and travel or mileage stipends. Essentially, most physicians who work per diem are supplementing their full-time position or have multiple per diem contracts at local hospitals. On the other hand, locum tenens assignments may require travel and often offer enough hours for full-time employment.

Side gigs

There are a variety of other nonclinical jobs that physicians can do, whether you want to take a break from clinical practice entirely or make some additional income on the side. These can range from consulting on pharmaceutical drug development or medical technology to medical writing and physician coaching.

Pediatrician Dr. Ravi Pujara shares how locums might be a good side gig.



WHEN YOU HAVE PERMANENT JOB



5 REASONS
LOCUM TENENS IS
A GREAT SIDE GIG
FOR DOCTORS

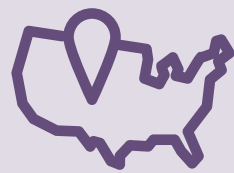


5 reasons locum tenens is a great side gig for doctors

**Supplementing
income while
building a
practice**



**Earning extra
income close
to home**



**Picking up
occasional shifts
for extra
earnings**



**Staying
clinically active**



**Gaining broader
clinical
experience**



PART
2

Working with
a locum tenens
agency

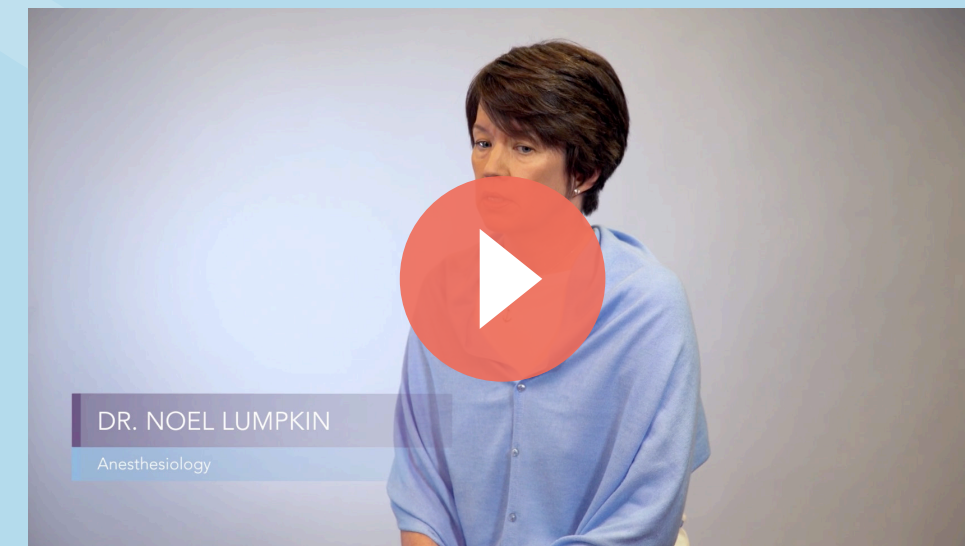
Should I work with a locum tenens agency, and how do I find one?

Though finding locum tenens assignments on your own is possible, an agency does much of the heavy lifting for you, including negotiating pay and schedules, navigating housing and travel options, and troubleshooting any issues that may arise. Here are a few reasons to work with a locum tenens agency:

- Access to more jobs in more locations; many hospitals use staffing agencies to fill their open locum tenens positions
- Recruiters with specialty and sub-specialty experience who can help you get the assignment that's the best match for you
- Help with licensing and credentialing
- Paid travel, housing, and malpractice insurance
- Support if something goes wrong

Make the smart choice: **How do the top locum tenens agencies compare?**

Hear what's important to an experienced locum physician when choosing an agency:



FAQ - WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN CHOOSING A STAFFING AGENCY?

AGENCY
CHECKLIST



Locum tenens agency checklist

- ✓ Find a recruiter you click with
- ✓ Compare benefits and pay across agencies
- ✓ Ensure the agency has plenty of jobs
- ✓ Ask if the agency offers licensing assistance
- ✓ Select an agency that prioritizes the locum



How to choose a locum tenens agency

Check NALTO: There are many locum tenens agencies, and it can be challenging to narrow your choices down to one. Start by checking out the **National Association of Locum Tenens Organizations (NALTO)**, which is committed to maintaining high industry standards for locum tenens agencies. All NALTO members must follow a code of ethics to protect relationships between physicians, locum tenens agencies, and healthcare facilities. NALTO also has an ethics committee that reviews all violations and complaints. **See a list of NALTO members** so you can choose a reputable agency.

Ask for references: Not all locum tenens agencies are part of NALTO, so vetting them before accepting a job is important.

“If the agency is not part of NALTO, I suggest you request three references from physicians they’ve previously placed and contact them directly,” says Dr. Vlad Dzhashi, who manages the hospitalist blog **The Locum Tenens Guy**.

Find your specialty: Next, determine whether the locum tenens agency has recruiters within your specialty. Large companies like CompHealth cover most specialties, while smaller firms may focus on only a few specialties or sub-specialties. Either agency can be an asset, depending on your practice area and the types of locum tenens jobs you’d like to take. You may earn more money using a smaller company but also have access to fewer jobs or regions throughout the country.

Ask colleagues: Finally, ask colleagues which agencies they work with and what their experience was like. Speaking to someone who’s already taken a locum tenens assignment can give you a better idea of what you want in an agency and how the process works.

EXPERIENCED LOCUMS SPEAK OUT

How to choose the right locums agency

How to choose a locum tenens recruiter

Once you’ve found an agency, a good recruiter is crucial to help you have a positive experience. Look for a good listener who understands what you need in a locum tenens assignment.

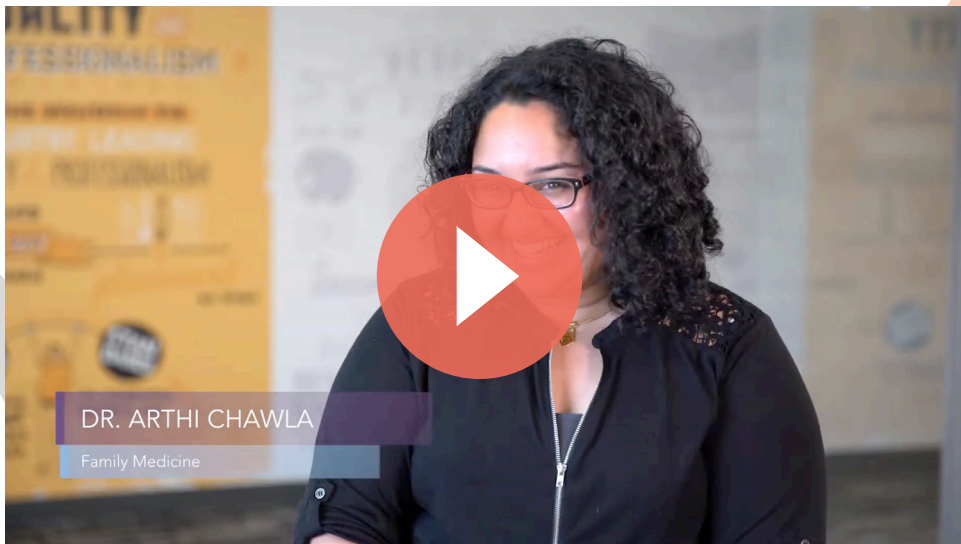
Other traits that describe great recruiters include:

- Responsive
- Detail-oriented
- Approachable
- Reliable
- Empathetic
- Supportive
- Trustworthy

Here’s what Dr. Arthi Chawla says about her CompHealth recruiter:

My recruiter isn’t just my recruiter; he’s my overall representative. I feel like any question I have I can go through him. I can shoot him a text or email pretty much whenever, and he usually responds pretty quickly or lets me know who exactly I need to talk to. He just understands me.

– Dr. Michaela Sakumura,
Emergency Medicine



WHY I WORK WITH COMPHEALTH

LOCATE AN ADVOCATE

Find a good locum tenens recruiter

Why doctors work with CompHealth

Dr. Sonya Sloan, who has been working with CompHealth for over 15 years, says her recruiter and team are like family. “They helped me with travel and licensing and would walk me through anything. They called me while I was on assignment,” she says.



WHY DR. SLOAN WORKS WITH COMPHEALTH

Right out of residency, Dr. Mandaar Gokhale called CompHealth because he was interested in locum tenens work. He’s worked with us ever since.



DR. GOKHALE - I WORK WITH COMPHEALTH BECAUSE...

Family medicine physician Dr. Tuan Vo was referred to CompHealth by a trusted friend and found out for himself how with CompHealth, he’s treated as a person first, not a dollar sign.



WHY I CHOOSE TO WORK WITH COMPHEALTH

Transitioning from a full-time job to locum tenens is made easier with the help of a good recruiter. For Dr. Danielle Anderson, the relationship she has with her recruiter ensures that she finds the right assignment fit, every time.



COMPHEALTH HELPS ME FIND THE RIGHT FIT

How to choose a locum tenens assignment

Here are five tips to keep in mind when choosing a locum tenens assignment:

1. Remember your motivations

You may be tempted to take the first assignment offered to you, but consider your reasons for trying locum tenens before signing on the dotted line. If enjoying a sunny vacation is your primary motivation, see if a job comes along in Florida, California, or Hawaii. If you want to take a short-term assignment to pay down student loans, a job with the highest hourly wage may be top of mind. If you want to help in underserved areas, a job in a rural, remote area might be perfect for you. Make sure the assignment you take fits with your overall goals.

2. Know your responsibilities

Your recruiter can help you understand some of the facility's expectations, but it's essential to know the details and ask plenty of questions. Neurologist and veteran locum Dr. Andrew Wilner recommends answering the following questions before you agree to an assignment:

- What electronic medical record system does the facility use?
- How many patients am I expected to see each day?
- Am I required to be on call or take emergency shifts?
- Will I renew prescriptions for patients I've never seen?
- Are there other mid-level practitioners like NPs and PAs who can help?

If something isn't written in the job description and you are concerned about it, ask. The healthcare facility should be able to answer all of your questions before you accept a job.

3. Consider how long it will take to get a new state license

If you have your heart set on seeing Alaska in the summer, start the licensing process early if you don't already have a current license for that state. Hospitals prefer physicians who already have a state license, and it can sometimes take months to get a new one, depending on state regulations. It may be better to take locum tenens assignments in states where you're already licensed while you wait for other licenses to come through. If you want to work for the federal government for either Veterans Affairs (VA) or the Indian Health Service (IHS), you probably won't have to get a new license to practice in a new state. Any state license will allow you to work at a VA hospital.

4. Ask to speak to a physician who's also worked at the hospital

A great way to determine whether a position is a good fit is to talk to another locum tenens doctor who's previously taken that job. Ask them what they liked and didn't like about the job, and if they're no longer working there, ask why they didn't return to the area.

5. Watch for red flags

Have a lot of other physicians passed on a certain locum tenens job? Did other doctors leave the assignment before their contract ended? Is the hiring manager unable to find other doctors who've worked locums there to speak to you? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, proceed with caution.



How locum tenens contracts work

The type of locum tenens contract you will be required to sign depends on whether you are working with a locum tenens agency or finding jobs on your own.

Working with a locum tenens agency

Once you've agreed to work with an agency, you will typically be required to sign an agency agreement authorizing them to represent you. The agency will then negotiate your pay for specific jobs with the healthcare facility on your behalf. Once you have agreed to an assignment, you'll receive a confirmation letter that includes:

- Specific assignment details, including dates, shifts, and worksite
- The pay rate the physician and facility agreed on for the assignment
- Contract buyout terms in case the physician decides to accept full-time employment at the facility
- Dates for the non-compete period for that facility

Working locum tenens without an agency

If you choose to find locum tenens jobs on your own, you'll have to negotiate employment terms and pay rates directly with the facility. Check out this [Locums Guy article for a guide to negotiating locum rates like a pro.](#)



10 tips for a successful locums assignment

Do you want to make your first locums assignment a success? Dr. Noel Lumpkin, anesthesiologist and experienced locum, shares the **10 things she does to start every assignment** off on the right foot.

- TIP 1

Check out the organization's website to learn about the site, your future colleagues, and more.
- TIP 2

Carry copies of all necessary documents and licenses on a flash drive or in a cloud in case you need them.
- TIP 3

Write down contact information for your supervisor in case you're delayed on your first day.
- TIP 4

Drive to the site before your first shift and figure out what you'll do for parking. Do you need a parking sticker or tag?
- TIP 5

Carry a notebook to write down bits of information you want to remember during orientation.
- TIP 6

Take photos of people you meet and save them so you can keep track of who's who.
- TIP 7

Bring a small pouch or bag to store any badges, locker keys, or pagers you're given.
- TIP 8

Figure out who is responsible for signing off on your timesheet, and find out where to send it. Always keep a copy for yourself, too.
- TIP 9

For a quick dinner, buy a rotisserie chicken and frozen vegetables. Microwave everything for a healthy meal. Don't forget a plate, utensils, and a mug!
- TIP 10

Find out what there is to do in the area by talking to colleagues, hotel personnel, and your patients. The public library is also a good source to learn about local events.

Locum tenens travel

If you work with an agency, **a travel professional will typically arrange a flight** that works with your schedule at no cost to you. You can also book your own flight if you prefer, and most agencies will reimburse this cost, minus any in-flight purchases or the cost of upgrading your flight if you choose to. However, as a physician independent contractor, some of these flight benefits may be tax deductible, so ask your tax advisor.

Your agency representative wants to ensure you have a great locum tenens assignment, so contact them if you have certain flight preferences, like a window or aisle seat or preferred time of day to travel.



When it's more convenient to drive your own car to the assignment, the locum tenens agency usually reimburses the miles you travel at the **IRS standard mileage rate**. The agency also generally pays for a rental car and car insurance if you fly to your assignment, though you may be responsible for the cost if you choose to upgrade the vehicle. While the rental car is intended for assignment and reasonable personal use when you're not at work, you should return the rental car or pay the agency the difference if you plan to arrive early or stay longer for a vacation or other personal travel.

Finally, the agency will usually reimburse you for other driving costs, including tolls, parking fees, fuel costs (for rental cars only), and mileage (for your own car), as long as you save your receipts.

Most staffing agencies allow you to collect reward points for airline, rental car, or hotel programs you already belong to. Call the agency with your account numbers so they can add them to the reservation and ensure you get reward points.

PART 3

How to prepare for a locum tenens assignment

Now that you've signed the paperwork, it's time to get ready for your assignment! Learn more about what to expect with travel, housing, onboarding, licensing, and credentialing.

Locum tenens housing

Most staffing agencies cover your housing costs, including deposits and utilities. They may even pay for furnishings if needed or do their best to find a furnished apartment close to the facility where you'll be working. For shorter assignments, you may stay in a hotel, which the agency also covers (minus room service, movie rentals, or other incidental costs you may incur).

Finding your own housing: If you'd prefer to find your own housing, the agency may offer you a stipend or reimburse you for reasonable housing costs as the assignment contract defines.

Staying in a hotel: In general, you'll stay in a standard hotel room if your assignment is a week or less and in a larger hotel room with a kitchenette if your assignment lasts more than one week and up to 30 days. If your assignment lasts longer than 30 days, you'll typically stay in a leased one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment that includes a TV and a bedroom set.

Communicating your needs: As with travel, it's important to communicate your housing needs and preferences to your representative so they can try to accommodate them. For example, you can tell the agency you'd prefer to live on the ground or top floor or specify that you need to be close to an elevator. The representative may also be able to secure a place that meets other preferences, like an on-site fitness center or pool, a king-sized bed, or a washer and dryer.

Traveling with family: If you'll be bringing a partner or family member on your assignment and need a larger apartment or home, it's important to communicate that to the agency early. Note that if the cost to accommodate your family exceeds your assignment's housing budget, you may be required to pay the difference.

Saving money: Though the agency doesn't cover all costs, some doctors have found ways to save money on hotel stays.

"I stay where there's a kitchen and bring my knife set and some spices. It's far more cost effective, healthier, and cheaper than eating out," says Dr. Ripal Patel, who works locum tenens with CompHealth.

Traveling with pets: Want to bring Fido along? Many agencies can find housing that allows pets, but this may be more difficult. You will also be responsible for any pet-related costs.



WORKING LOCUMS WORKS FOR DOG OWNERS

Onboarding as a locum tenens physician

Though your locum tenens onboarding experience will vary depending on the assignment, it's important to know that most facilities expect locum tenens physicians to be ready to jump into their work with minimal training. However, your agency will help as much as possible, usually by sending a first-day letter before you start the assignment with travel details, orientation information, and a link to the time-entry portal.

Your orientation may last only a few hours or a few days, depending on the length of your assignment and the size of the facility. It should include:

- Parking instructions
- Facility maps and directions
- EMR system steps
- Emergency contacts
- Staff information, specifically backup providers who'll support you

Ask questions: Even if the healthcare facility frequently uses locum tenens providers, you may not get all the necessary information, so ask lots of questions. You can also reach out to your agency recruiter anytime, as they are a liaison between you and the facility.

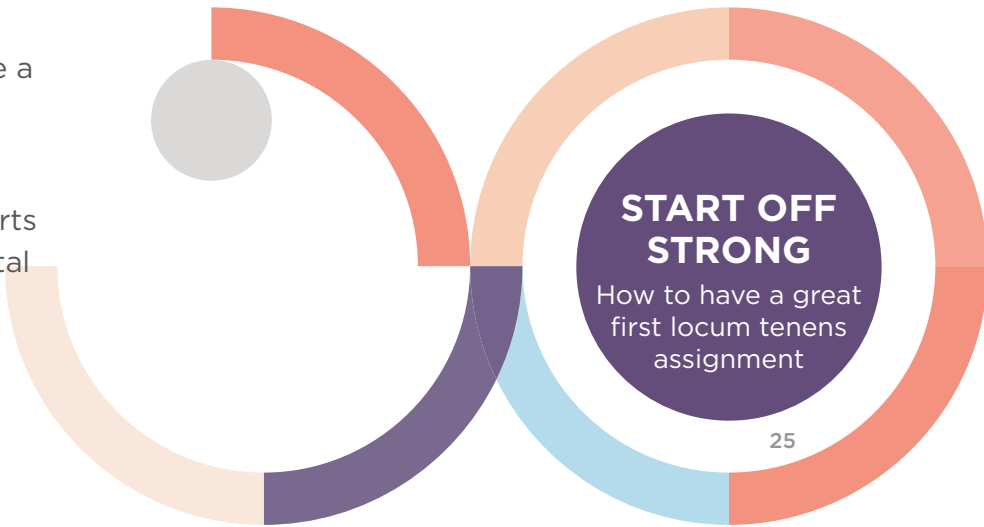
Get to know the hospital coordinator: Prepare yourself before your assignment starts by establishing a relationship with the hospital coordinator. This person will serve as your

A lot of hospitals have gone electronic with training videos and online tutorials for the EMR systems, so that's something you can learn before getting on-site. Onboarding may be different than it used to be, but you can still get the training you need to be successful.

– CompHealth recruiter

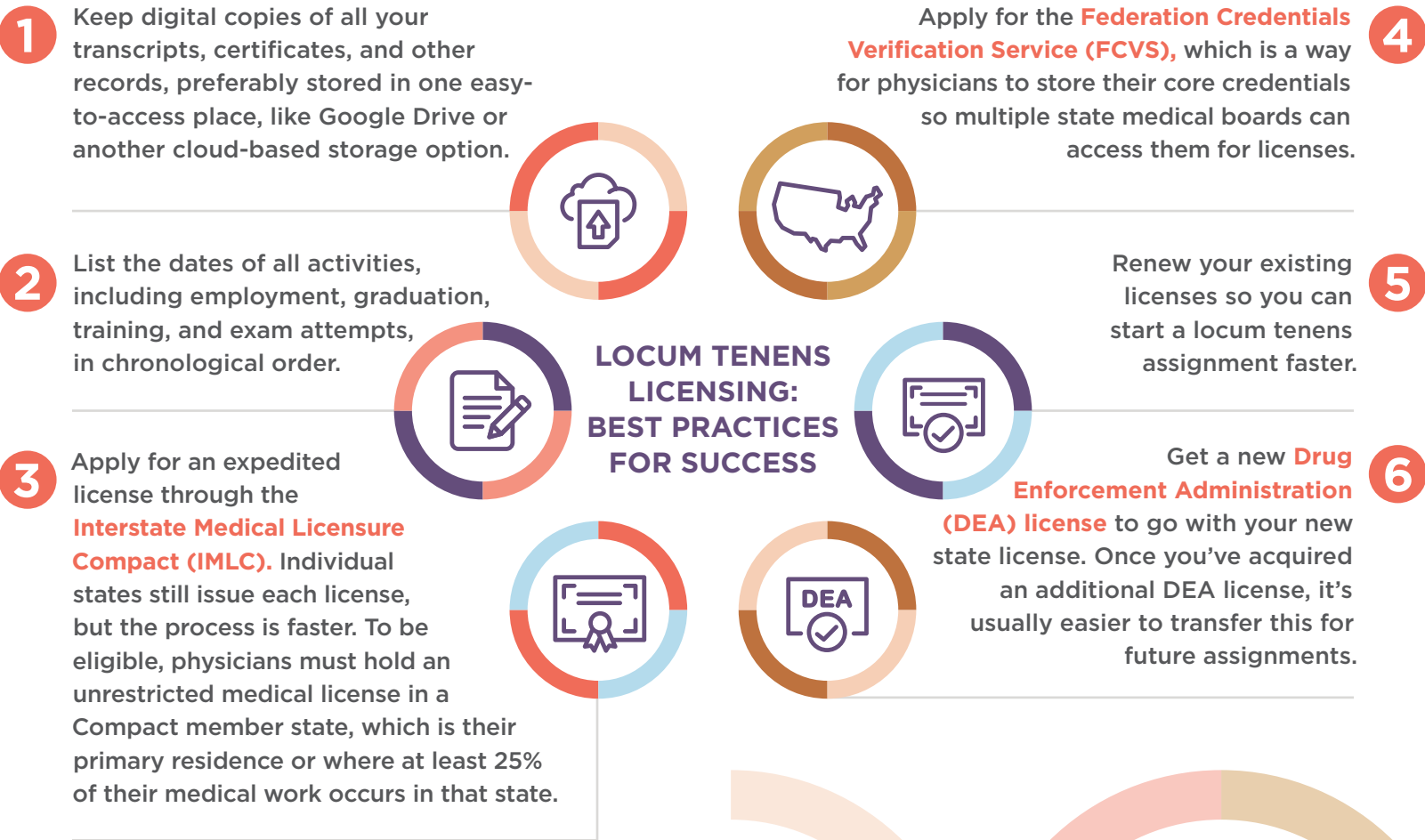
primary point of contact and can send you any documents or training you need to complete before starting.

Arrive early: If possible, arrive one day before your assignment begins so you can orient yourself to the facility, which will help make the first day go more smoothly. You should also plan to verify your start date and time with the hospital coordinator and dress in professional business attire for your first day, even if scrubs will be the norm every day after that.

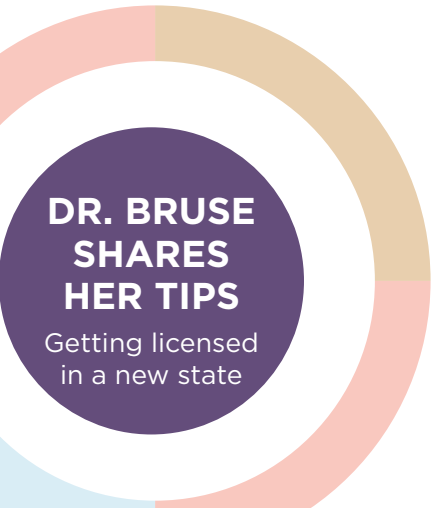


Physician licensing for locum tenens

If you need to **get a new state medical license** in order to work a locum tenens assignment, some agencies will assist you. For example, CompHealth covers all licensing costs and takes care of the filing. This is often the longest and most complicated part of preparing for a locum tenens assignment, so following these six tips helps streamline the process:



NOTE: If you're planning to work in telehealth, you must be licensed in the state where you'll be working and the state where the patient is currently located.



Locum tenens credentialing

The **credentialing process ensures a physician is qualified** for the locum tenens position they were hired for and eligible to practice. It includes verifying your credentials with the locum tenens agency and securing authorization, or hospital privileging, at the facility where you'll be working.

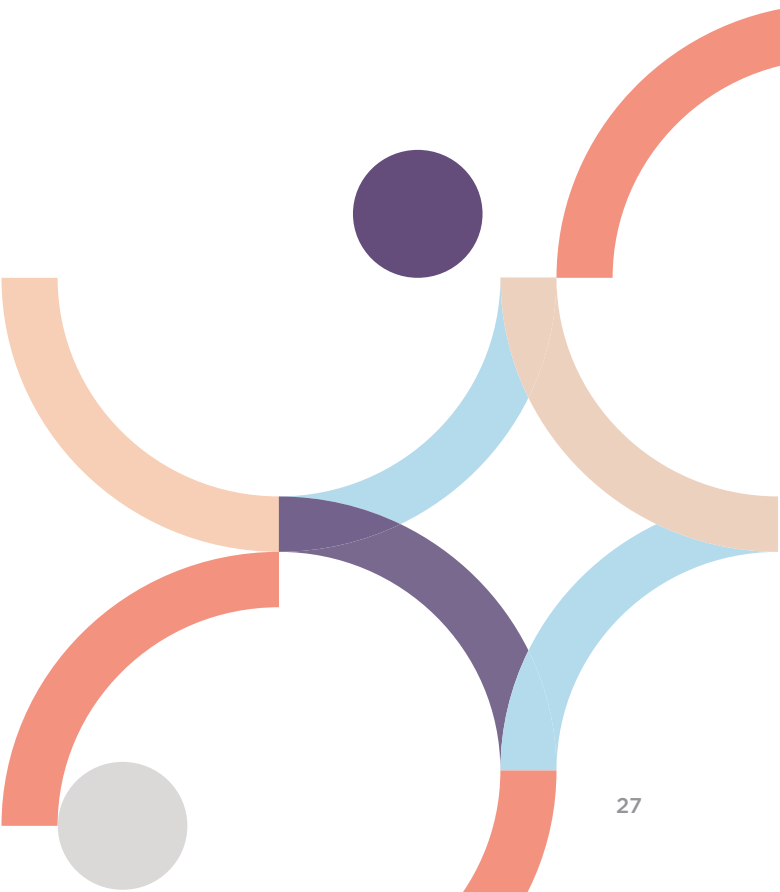
Though process length can vary from a few weeks to six months, depending on an organization's requirements, the credentialing process is important because it protects both the physician and facility from liability if the doctor is charged with malpractice or negligence.

Below are the main steps physicians are usually required to complete for credentialing:

- Application
- Supporting documents, including medical licenses, DEA ID number, board certification, education, and health documentation
- Malpractice carrier and case information, work history, and peer reference verifications
- Approval from department heads and hospital boards

To simplify the credentialing process:

- Keep digital copies of your records in a cloud-based storage system so they're easily accessible
- Create a list of your malpractice insurance providers and dates
- Update your employment history regularly and include every facility where you've worked
- Be open about problems or concerns in your work history
- Have a list of references who are available and ready to respond
- Stay in touch with the credentialing team and meet all deadlines





PART
4

How locum tenens pay, malpractice, and taxes work

How locum tenens pay works

Your locum tenens agency, not the facility where you're working, pays your salary. CompHealth providers enter their time in the **MyCompHealth portal** and are paid weekly through direct deposit. Your pay rate is outlined in the confirmation letter you receive from the agency when you agree to take a locum tenens assignment.

While locum tenens pay is typically higher than hourly pay for a salaried employee, it's important to note that a physician independent contractor must also pay their own taxes and cover other benefits, including retirement plans and health and life insurance.

Curious about the pay range for locum tenens physicians? Rates vary based on specialty, state, type of facility, and skill set, but you can use the **Locumstory specialty tool** to see an average salary, schedule, assignment length, and the demand for your specialty.

How health insurance works for locum tenens physicians

Because locums are independent contractors, they don't receive a benefits package. This doesn't affect locum tenens providers who take side jobs while continuing their full-time employment, but it can be a concern for those who do not have coverage through another employer.

Options for finding locum tenens health insurance include:

- Having your partner or spouse add you to their employer-sponsored benefits plan
- Paying COBRA insurance premiums if you are transitioning between permanent jobs
- Using **HealthCare.gov** to enroll in an insurance plan
- Looking at professional associations and groups that provide coverage, including the American Medical Association and the National Association for the Self-Employed
- Consulting with a local independent insurance agent for coverage

FIND OUT MORE

How does locum tenens pay and salary work for physicians?

How locum tenens taxes work


Locum tenens taxes can be complicated, especially if you work in more than one state, so it's a good idea to work with a tax advisor with locum tenens or multi-state filing experience to help you file your taxes.

5 things to know about taxes for locum tenens physicians

- 1 Most work as independent contractors and receive a 1099 instead of a W-2
- 2 Taxes are not automatically deducted from your paycheck
- 3 Estimated taxes must be paid to the IRS quarterly
- 4 It can get complicated, especially if you work in several states
- 5 You can take deductions for insurance premiums, retirement contributions, and more

“Make sure you find a tax preparer who is experienced in your particular situation,” recommends Alexis Gallati, founder of **Cerebral Tax Advisors**. “You have to make sure you use someone who has experience with multi-state taxation if you’re working in different states. It’s really important they know all of the states’ tax codes.”

– Alexis Gallati, founder of Cerebral Tax Advisors



Locum tenens tax basics

W-2 employees vs. 1099 contractors

Most locum tenens physicians work as independent contractors, which means they receive a 1099 form to report their income. W-2 employees, on the other hand, have their employers automatically deduct tax payments from their paychecks. 1099 independent contractors are generally required to pay quarterly taxes.

LLCs, S corps, and other business entities

If you do decide to create a business or tax entity, most locum tenens physicians create an LLC (a business structure that legally separates you and your business) or an S corp (an election that indicates how the business is taxed). According to accountant Jerry Callahan, who specializes in physician taxes, your taxes will be essentially the same whether or not you set up a business entity like an LLC.

Dr. Jim Mock, an emergency medicine physician, says **he enjoys tax advantages through his S corp** by paying himself a monthly base salary and doing a shareholder distribution if he exceeds his base salary.

No matter what you decide, remember these four things about locum tenens taxes:

- Give your agency your form W-9 before beginning your first assignment
- You must pay income tax on income as you earn it, which means quarterly estimated tax payments
- Pay the quarterly estimated tax payments on time (generally on April 15, June 15, September 15, and January 15) or you will pay a roughly 3% tax penalty
- The quarterly estimated tax payments must be 100% or 110% of your prior-year tax or 90% of your current-year estimated tax



How does locum tenens malpractice insurance work?

Locum tenens physicians usually receive malpractice coverage from their agency, as long as they're working an assignment for that agency.

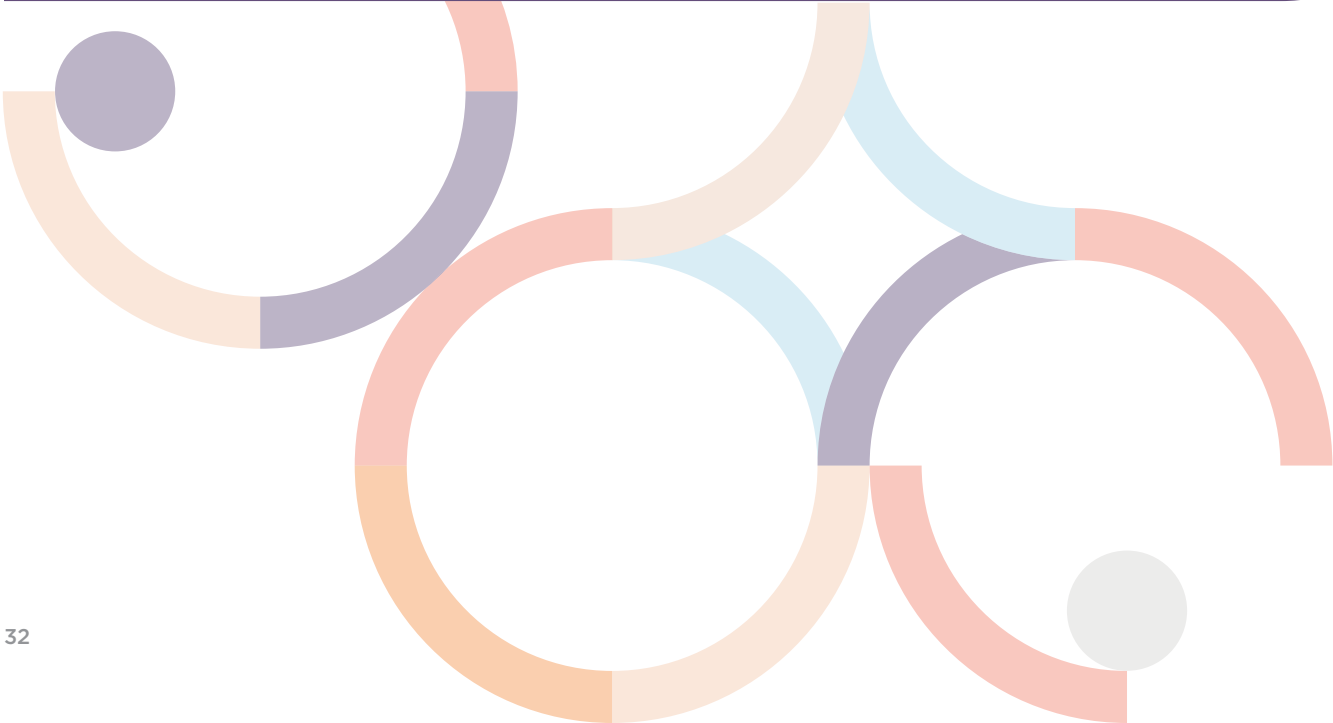
CompHealth offers claims-made malpractice coverage, which covers a claim made against the insured provider during the policy period, regardless of when the claim incident occurred. This coverage applies even if you're no longer working for CompHealth when a claim is made.

Some states also have **patient compensation funds (PCFs)** that limit liability or act as an extra layer of coverage. A PCF compensates those harmed by medical providers or entities who participate in that state's fund. Providers working assignments in states with these funds will be enrolled in their state's PCF.

“CompHealth provides me with A-rated, top-notch malpractice insurance with a tail so I am protected even after the time that I leave.”

– Dr. Paymon Kayhani, Hospitalist/Internal Medicine







PART
5

Locum tenens is a highly flexible career option for physicians, with a variety of options depending on your wants, needs, and career stage.

Unique ways
to work
locum tenens

Transitioning from locum tenens to a permanent position

Some physicians use locums as a way to work in a variety of practice settings and geographic regions before taking a permanent position. If you're interested in this option and want a locum tenens assignment to eventually turn into a permanent position (if the facility is interested), follow these suggestions:

- Work locum tenens soon after completing your fellowship or residency
- Get to know the community whenever you take a new assignment
- Ask your recruiter why the hospital where you work hires locum tenens and whether they would be interested in hiring a full-time physician
- Develop relationships with other physicians and support staff at each facility where you work

Neurologist Dr. Madeleine Geraghty explains how locums is a great way to “try before you buy,” helping you to find the right fit.



DR. GERAGHTY - CAN LOCUM TENENS LEAD TO A PERMANENT POSITION?

Planning for retirement

Some physicians who are nearing retirement are unsure how to navigate a more part-time schedule, and locum tenens assignments can help. Here are some ways locum tenens can help ease the transition to retirement:

- Choose long-term assignments so you can enjoy the area where you'll be working
- Think of locum tenens work as a way to continue helping others and doing something you're good at
- Consider selling your private practice and taking locum tenens jobs back to back
- Take short breaks when you need a vacation or break rather than retiring completely
- Choose a different practice setting if you're burnt out from years of private practice

The following resources can help your transition into retirement:

- **Working locums in semi-retirement**
- **Why these 5 physicians continue practicing after retirement**

Cardiologist Dr. Michael Higginbotham says retirement has a negative connotation. He instead thinks of locums as allowing him to work part time.



HOW DOES LOCUM TENENS MAKE IT EASIER TO TRANSITION INTO RETIREMENT?

Travel abroad with international locum tenens

While some providers prefer to take jobs in the United States, others want to explore the world and **work locum tenens internationally**. If you're interested in leaving the country, keep a few things in mind:

- It takes nearly 6 – 9 months to gather paperwork, secure a visa, and vet opportunities for international assignments
- Some assignments, like in the Caribbean, can be as short as a few weeks, but others, like in Canada or New Zealand, may require a commitment of up to a year
- Many clients advertise international locum tenens jobs six to nine months in advance, so it's important to start speaking to a recruiter early to get the process started

Despite the challenges, **many providers say their experiences on international assignments are invaluable.**

I love that I didn't have to work the weekends and could travel. We could put the real-life stuff on hold, and that was it. I had that freedom to adventure and to explore a lot more than I give myself time to do here (in the U.S.).

– Dr. Jason Lambrese, Psychiatry

International locum veteran Dr. Colleen Haynes discusses the unique challenges and rewards of practicing medicine in international settings and shares how her passion for travel and adventure has shaped her career and fueled her dedication to providing healthcare in unique and varied settings.



INTERNATIONAL 101

The beginner's guide to international locum tenens assignments

Ready to get started in locum tenens?

We can help you with everything you need to become an independent contractor while working locum tenens. We're the experts, and we make it easy. Our healthcare staffing services cost you nothing and require no commitment — besides letting our representatives get to know you better so they can understand your unique situation, preferences, and goals. Put us to work and see how we leverage our industry experience and job network to help you find a career opportunity that offers you more financial, professional, and personal rewards.

Are you wondering what it looks like to work locum tenens with CompHealth? Step by step, this video walks you through the entire process, from your first call to your first assignment:



WORKING LOCUM TENENS WITH COMPHEALTH



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complete this form to get started!



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