For decades, locum tenens has been one of the best-kept secrets in healthcare. There are a multitude of reasons why physicians choose Locum tenens.

Source: Physicians Practice

For decades, locum tenens has been one of the best-kept secrets in healthcare. When I first started recruiting doctors for temporary assignments nearly 20 years ago, I spent so much time explaining what locum tenens meant that I rarely had the chance to talk about its benefits.

But locum tenens isn't a secret anymore.
A recent survey from CompHealth and Hanover Research found that one in five physicians have worked locum tenens. The survey also revealed that almost all physicians have a positive (55 percent) or neutral (42 percent) impression of locums.

The survey shows that there is a long list of reasons why physicians work locum tenens.
Here's the breakdown:

1. **Supplementing core income (26 percent)**
   It's no surprise that money tops the list. The majority of locum tenens physicians take on temporary assignments in addition to their day job as a way to repay student loans, to pay for kids' schooling or weddings, or to plan for retirement. Back in 2013, only 19 percent of survey respondents listed supplemental income as the top reason for working locums. The jump to 26 percent is not surprising, given that many doctors say they are earning less since the ACA was implemented.

2. **While searching for a full-time position or between full-time jobs (17 percent)**
   Along with a new job comes a lot of hoops to jump through — licensing, credentialing, hospital privileging — all of which take time. Many physicians turn to locums while they wait to start a new job rather than lose out on income.

3. **Between residency/fellowship to a full-time job (13 percent)**
   Young physicians are flocking to locum tenens. Instead of immediately signing a long-term contract, as many as 20 percent of recent graduates are working locums right out of residency. These young doctors find that locums allows them to find out what they like in a job and, equally important, what they don’t.

4. **Controlling your own schedule (9 percent)**
   In a busy practice, it's not easy to take time off without feeling like you're letting your patients or your partners down. Locum tenens allows physicians to choose when they work, without having to ask for permission to take an extended vacation or to schedule work around personal commitments.

5. **Personal life transition (6 percent)**
   Sometimes life happens. A wedding, a divorce, a birth, a death, or any other personal event can change how and where physicians choose to practice medicine. If you're looking for a new job in a new town, locums can help with the transition.

6. **The salary was appealing (6 percent)**
   Because they are independent contractors who do not receive health or retirement benefits, locum tenens doctors earn a higher hourly rate. Locum tenens staffing companies also cover the physician's travel, housing, and malpractice insurance, all of which makes locums financially attractive.

7. **Expanding experience through new cases (5 percent)**
   A rare disease in the northeast may be common in the southwest and vice versa. Many physicians turn to locum tenens when they want to face a new medical challenge or learn about different treatments.

8. **A bridge to retirement (5 percent)**
   After years of practicing medicine, it's not easy to quit cold turkey. I've spoken with many doctors who thought they could pull it off, only to find that it's harder to retire than they thought. Working a locum tenens job on a part-time basis allows late-career physicians a way to continue seeing patients at their own pace, without bearing the burden of running a practice or maintaining a full...
workload.

9. **Trying before you buy (5 percent)**
It's not just recent graduates who want to make sure they're making a good decision before they sign a contract. Locum tenens assignments give insight into the inner workings of a facility you would never get during a job interview or a short onsite visit.

10. **Wanting to see the country or world (4 percent)**
Facilities in all 50 states use locum tenens doctors to fill staffing gaps. These open positions are a good excuse to work in an area near family or in a place you've never visited.

11. **Serving rural or underserved areas (2 percent)**
Locum jobs are available in all types of practice settings and locations, but there is always a pressing need in small towns. These assignments allow physicians to give back without having to go too far from home.

12. **Avoiding monotony or burnout (1 percent)**
Burnout is on the rise in all areas of medicine, largely as a result of increased paperwork and decreased autonomy. Locum tenens gives physicians control over how they practice medicine — with less paperwork.

13. **Having more time to provide quality care (1 percent)**
When you're busy dealing with insurers, staffing issues, and government regulations, it's easy to lose track of why you went into medicine in the first place — to help patients. Locum tenens takes away the administrative responsibilities so you can focus on delivering care. Locum tenens isn't for everyone. But if you were looking for a reason to try it, you now have 13 of them.

**Source URL:**

**Links:**
[1] [http://www.pediatricsconsultantlive.com/blog](http://www.pediatricsconsultantlive.com/blog)
[2] [http://www.pediatricsconsultantlive.com/authors/melissa-byington](http://www.pediatricsconsultantlive.com/authors/melissa-byington)