



9 Physician Recruitment Trends to Prepare For in 2018

Katon Direct

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With the Boomer population rapidly aging, and with more Americans gaining access to healthcare, the demand for physicians is increasing faster than ever before.

How will you meet your recruiting needs as the physician shortage continues to grow?

As physician recruiting becomes increasingly competitive, you must prepare to overcome your hiring challenges now.

Here are 9 trends impacting physician recruiting in 2018:



#1: The ongoing physician shortage

Patients who haven't seen a doctor in years will start scheduling annual exams with their primary care physicians and specialists.

With physician demand increasing dramatically, and with older physicians retiring, the shortage is only getting worse. Data suggest that physicians are retiring at a younger age as a result of regulatory burdens, and that more young physicians are opting for non-clinical careers.

- The Association of American Medical Colleges estimates that in 2018 the physician shortage will be between 17,500 and 32,400 across the U.S.
- Experts estimate that by 2020, the physician shortage could be as high as 90,000 with residency levels staying flat. This labor supply problem demands that you fine-tune your recruitment strategies in order to fill your open positions as quickly as possible.

#2: The bidding wars for the limited talent pool

As healthcare consolidation continues in 2018, areas served by more than one hospital system will find physicians in the enviable position of enjoying bidding wars due to the limited supply of experienced physicians.

This is driving salaries up, and with limited budgets, will make physician recruiting more difficult in 2018 and beyond.

When you find an experienced, qualified candidate, your offer needs to be competitive to get them to join your team.

#3: Accelerating physician retirement

Physician retirements will continue to accelerate in 2018, leading to an increase in turnover rates at a time when hospitals are struggling to retain their talent.

With the combination of an aging patient population and an aging physician population, the healthcare system is facing an enormous dilemma: Who will provide healthcare to the elderly when physicians themselves are retiring?

As the talent pool gets younger and less experienced, recruiters can expect their jobs to get more difficult.



#4: Rural hospitals struggling to attract physicians from urban areas

Not only is there a physician shortage, there is a physician distribution imbalance as well.

Urban centers are often more appealing to qualified candidates, while recruiters in rural areas struggle to attract experienced physicians.

- Despite rural hospitals often offering higher compensation, younger doctors are attracted to the culture and entertainment options offered by urban areas.
- Many physicians are increasingly valuing “quality of life” and are less likely to work at a rural location.
- Rural hospitals must now focus on the benefits of relocation and offer compelling packages to attract talent from outside their local markets.

#5: Physician salaries keep increasing

- Physician salaries increased over 14% in 2017 in certain specialties and this trend will continue in 2018.
- Hospitals need to offer recruitment incentives to attract experienced candidates.
- As a result, the costs of physician recruitment will continue to rise.

Since many hospitals operate on strict recruiting budgets, it may be difficult to offer competitive salaries to attract the right candidates. You need to be creative in offering a compelling package on a limited budget.



#6: Job offers require perks and benefits to attract candidates

With a tight labor supply, candidates have increased leverage in terms of salary, benefits and reimbursement.

- Be prepared to offer loan forgiveness, relocation assistance and signing bonuses to attract top talent.
- Emphasize the unique cultural benefits of your location, with an emphasis on work-life balance and leisure activities to attract the talent you need.

These perks can give your organization an advantage even if your base salary offer isn't as high as the competition.

#7: The physician recruitment cycle is growing longer

As competition for talent increases in 2018, it will take longer to fill open positions. Especially in rural areas and certain high-demand specialties, the longer recruitment cycle may have a negative impact on patients and providers.

Utilizing a variety of targeted recruiting tactics can help you attract the right candidates faster. Recruiters need to take advantage of technology to improve communication with candidates and increase their candidate pools.



#8: Physicians are using their smartphones for career search

More than 67% of physicians browse career sites and social media job opportunities, and almost half use their phones for search. Your recruitment plan must be digitally-focused and mobile optimized to adapt to their changing habits.

Physician recruitment is looking more like marketing now that organizations all compete to attract the finite pool of top physician talent. Recruiters need to embrace new methods to target and appeal to physicians who are more connected than ever.

#9: Nurture candidates through the hiring funnel

Physicians are inundated with messages. As a result, your recruitment efforts must engage candidates and nurture them through the recruitment cycle until they are ready to join your organization. Focus on the candidate experience through the hiring process to avoid losing candidates in the hiring funnel.

A positive candidate experience leaves the candidate feeling respected, valued, and excited to work at your facility. Recruiters must communicate the next steps and deploy timely communications through every step of the recruiting process.



Quickly target and connect your physician recruitment campaign to qualified candidates now.

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For over 15 years Katon Direct has pioneered in connecting healthcare facilities with the most qualified candidates.

With over 1.5MM doctors in over 30 specialties in our industry-leading database, we can help you fill your talent funnel with qualified candidates.

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