



**6 HEALTHCARE TRENDS  
THAT WILL IMPACT  
PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT  
IN 2019**

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2019 will be an exciting year for the healthcare industry. All the predicted change that will come with technology advancements and emerging delivery models will have a significant impact on physicians. In such a quickly evolving industry, physicians will be questioning how they view themselves as practitioners, the practical application of their long-term career goals, and the desirability of the profession in general.

Ultimately these thoughts will continue to shift practice norms and will trickle down to the physician recruiting process.

Looking ahead, here are six important trends that will likely impact your physician recruiting models and success measures in 2019.

### ONE: THE SUPPLY VS. DEMAND ISSUE WILL INTENSIFY

You've heard it before, and you'll continue to hear it for the foreseeable future: Patient demand is increasing, but the supply of active/available physicians is not keeping pace to meet that demand.

Here are the statistics that keep physician recruiters awake at night:

#### Supply

*Shortage of Physicians:* The Association of American Medical Colleges The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2016 to 2030 projects a physician shortfall of between 42,600 and 121,300 physicians by 2030. Included in this overall statistic are the following specific category shortfalls:

- Primary care shortage between 14,800 and 49,300
- Non-primary care specialties shortage between 33,800 and 72,700
- Surgical specialties shortfall between 20,700 and 30,500

*Decreased Work Week:* According to an AMA survey of physicians age 35 or under an increasing number of physicians are choosing to work part-time. Between 2002 and 2016 the study noted a trend toward physicians of all ages working fewer hours. With this trend expected to continue into 2019 and beyond, it is projected that by 2030 there will be 32,500 fewer physician FTEs.

*Aging Workforce:* For all specialties, retirement will have the most significant effect on future physician supply. More than one-third of all active physicians will be 65 or older in the next ten years. We're looking at massive retirement and reduced working hours without the supply available to make up the shortfall.

## **Demand**

From 2016 to 2030, the U.S. population is projected to grow by close to 11%. During this time, those aged 65 and over is expected to grow by 50%. Since seniors consume more health care and have more chronic health conditions than younger populations, the percentage growth in demand for services used by seniors is projected to be incredibly high.

Additionally, population health initiatives and the Affordable Care Act have increased access to care for millions of Americans, placing increasing administrative and clinical burdens on practitioners.

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## **TWO: CONTINUED HEALTHCARE CONSOLIDATION AND INCREASING NUMBERS OF EMPLOYED PHYSICIANS**

The move away from smaller, independent practices to a hospital employed physician model has had a huge impact on physician recruitment. The uptick in the number and pace of hospitals acquiring physician practices was first studied by the nonprofit Physicians Advocacy Institute in 2016. The study also noted a jump in the number of hospital-employed physicians – rising by almost 25% over the previous four years. The employed physician model is attractive to physicians for a variety of economic, regulatory, collaborative and value-based reasons.



As the rise in the employed physician practice model continues, healthcare consolidation has increased as well. Consolidation is expected to continue in 2019, creating more and larger “super” or “mega” healthcare organizations that can provide advanced resources and benefits to physicians. By merging organizations, these consolidated health systems may also pool resources in the area of recruitment and create powerful and well-financed recruiting machines.

Regardless of your size, a solid 2019 recruitment strategy must take the competitive landscape into account. In order to create recruitment strategies that are aggressive enough to compete for physician candidates in this hyper-competitive and well-funded landscape, you must understand and articulate where your strengths lie. For example:

- Does your organization protect physician autonomy within the clinical environment?
- Are you able to provide advanced facilities and equipment out of reach of small practices or independent providers?
- Are you building practices from the ground up vs. acquiring established practices?
- Have you created a collaborative environment that encourages networking and referrals?

## THREE: THE GROWING IMPACT OF TELEHEALTH

Telehealth and telemedicine are two buzzwords that have been around for a few years. Moving into 2019, this form of digital medicine is finally poised to make a significant impact. Thanks to some proactive 2018 legislation, reimbursement models are beginning to acknowledge and promote the telehealth approach. Additionally, Medicare Advantage is working to modernize plans to expand coverage of telehealth benefits for enrollees.

Physicians really benefit from a care environment that includes telehealth practices. It allows them to expand their reach, (especially in rural areas), achieve greater patient satisfaction, and introduce more flexibility into their schedule. As a recruiting professional it is essential to know where your organization stands on the practice of telehealth and be able to articulate the benefits to your physician candidates.

## FOUR: RECRUITING TECHNOLOGY IS GETTING SMARTER

Recruiting systems are moving way beyond the applicant tracking system functionality to a full recruitment management system. Thanks to Artificial Intelligence these sophisticated programs are customer relationship management (CRM) based and employ myriad practices that positively influence the entire candidate application experience.

When your recruiting system can do everything from identifying candidates to pre-screening and scheduling interviews to communicating news and updates to candidates, it leaves you free to perfect your strategy and build your pipeline.



## FIVE: CANDIDATE TECHNOLOGY PATTERNS ARE EVOLVING



Let's be honest. Physicians can be a tough audience to reach. Historically, they haven't been big on personal technology and are known to keep their digital footprint minimal.

All that is shifting, and in 2019 we should see big changes in how physicians are using technology and an increase in their connectivity.

For example, more than 67% of physicians now browse career sites and social media job opportunities, and almost half use mobile devices for search. Your recruitment plan must be digitally-focused and optimized to capitalize on their changing habits.

## SIX: SOURCING CANDIDATES AND GROWING YOUR PIPELINE IS A PRIORITY

Having an effective sourcing strategy that keeps your pipeline robust with qualified candidates is imperative to successful physician recruitment in 2019. A pipeline flush with qualified candidates allows you to segment your audience and target your messaging for a better success rate.

When faced with aggressive recruitment goals and a shrinking candidate pool, it is vital that you understand the most important trends that will affect your candidate pool in 2019. You will need to cast a wider – and smarter – net in 2019 and develop strategies to stand out in the highly competitive recruiting environment.

As you build your recruitment strategy, supplement your candidate pipeline with a partner like Katon Direct who offers verified talent funnels and high conversion rates.

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