

Medical Groups Ready to Recruit with Stimulus Funds in 2010

But Most Lack Retention Plans

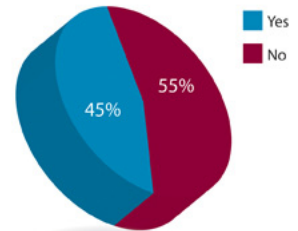




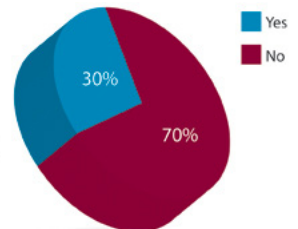
The Delta Companies recently surveyed medical practice administrators at the Medical Group Management Association's (MGMA) annual conference in Denver, Colorado. The most noteworthy findings came from attendees who provided feedback on their practice's allocation of healthcare stimulus funds and retention plans.

Many practice administrators are preparing to use federal funds for the recruitment of providers and expansion of care in their communities. Congress has also included assistance directly to the workforce itself by offering incentives such as student loan repayment and scholarship programs to help combat the shortage of healthcare professionals in underserved areas. Almost half of the healthcare administrators surveyed by The Delta Companies said they would be allocating stimulus funds or additional dollars in 2010 for the recruitment of permanent providers and almost a third said they would be allocating additional funds for supplemental staffing providers next year.

Have you allocated any healthcare stimulus funds or additional dollars in 2010 for the recruitment of direct hire providers?



Have you allocated any healthcare stimulus funds or additional dollars in 2010 for the recruitment of supplemental staffing providers?

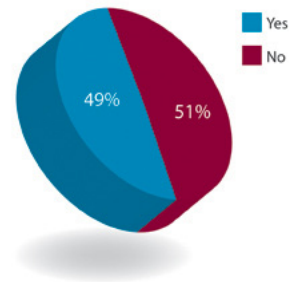


Regardless of federal assistance, the challenge of attracting individuals to the field of medicine and increasing the supply of healthcare professionals remains a concern. While the gap between the number of providers and those in need of care widens, retention is becoming increasingly important to facilities in such a competitive job market.



However, the majority of administrators surveyed admitted that they do not have a formal retention plan in place to keep the providers long-term once they're recruited.

Does your organization have a formal retention plan in place to retain full-time providers?



Whether or not a provider is retained can begin as early as the recruitment process and first introduction to the facility at which they'll be practicing. It's important that both parties communicate with clarity during the hiring phase regarding such topics as the terms of their employment agreement and expectations of each other. Communicating with transparency from the beginning can help build loyalty, commitment and trust between the provider and the practice. The number of facilities conducting a single interview prior to a provider making their decision is rising, making first impressions more important than ever.

The recruitment of a provider without full disclosure or a realistic view of the opportunity can lead to job dissatisfaction and turnover in the early stages of employment or working relationship. Among a number of negative consequences, turnover can ultimately hurt a hospital's ability to provide care to its patients, not to mention a loss of revenue caused by a provider's vacancy. Once providers have completed the hiring process, on-boarding becomes an important tool in sustaining the initial excitement of a new job.

Successful on-boarding programs should include more than the typical acclimation to processes and systems, and go beyond the work environment itself. Assigning a mentor or tenured provider can help a new provider through coaching, role modeling or simply answering questions. Making a provider's family feel welcome and helping to integrate them into the community is also a key aspect to retention as they will be making a number of decisions with input from their spouse or partner. It's vital to understand that the hired provider is not the only one experiencing a change in surroundings.



Facilities should recognize that a focus on retention after the initial orientation period itself is important as well. Sustaining the initial energy associated with on-boarding can be difficult. Conducting periodic one-on-one meetings (or “O3’s”) will help to consistently engage a provider and supply an open and honest forum for listening and offering feedback. Outside of a one-on-one meeting it’s essential that their leadership is approachable and recognizes them in group settings among their peers. Enculturation is also a significant step to help the provider feel that they belong. Do they know the facility’s value system or purpose? Are they invited to social events or feel that they are part of a larger family? How well do they understand their role as it pertains to the purpose of your organization? Change is inevitable, and when a provider leaves a facility there is an opportunity to learn. Conduct a “game film” or exit interview that will debrief the facility on positive and negative attributes of the provider’s experience.

Adhering to these crucial points of retention and formulating a plan to couple with 2010 recruitment efforts will enable healthcare facilities to improve on the experience that providers will have at their organization and in their communities.

