

How to Select the Right Practice Opportunity...

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Introduction-Selecting the right practice opportunity can be overwhelming whether you are just coming out of residency or moving from an established practice. By following these steps, you can make the process a little more manageable.

Pre-Visit-Before you begin contacting other practices or headhunters, it is important for you to decide what you want. That may sound obvious, but many physicians have never taken the time to decide where (geographically) they would most like to live, which may be the most important question to start with.

After location, focus your attention on things such as group size. Are you interested in a small or large group? This will have implications for your call schedule. How often would you be comfortable being on call?

You will also want to think about whether you want a hospital practice or whether you would prefer to turn patients over to a Hospitalist group.

How about nursing homes? Do you feel comfortable covering nursing homes for other members of your practice? Or would you rather not do this? Be honest!

Finally, consider your productivity. How busy would you like to be? How many patients per day do you feel comfortable seeing? "Busy" means different things to different people. Think through all of these things prior to interviewing with a group.

The Visit

- Pay attention to and look for group chemistry as one of the most important factors in selecting a practice. Remember that picking a physician partner is not like a marriage, it is a marriage. Your physician partner or partners will help determine your financial and professional future. You will also be spending a large amount of your waking hours with your physician partners.
- Pay attention to the general environment. What is the general atmosphere of the practice? What is the group's style and efficiency of handling patients? Does it appear to be well managed?
- Learn about the structure of the group from a legal, financial and decision-making standpoint.
- Ask questions about the group's expectations of the new physician. How busy does the group expect you to be, and how quickly? How does the group plan to promote the new physician to build the practice?

After all of the above questions are answered to your satisfaction, you can begin to investigate the compensation package including salary, bonus, benefits and other perks of the job. Ideally, groups will be able to answer these questions, but don't be surprised if they have a hard time getting specific with their answers. Many groups have not added a new practitioner for a while and have not thought through the details of their particular offering.

Additional Thoughts on the Interview-The following tips will help make your visit more successful:

- Pay attention to your appearance. Many groups get immediately turned off by a great clinician simply because that clinician is dressed unprofessionally or too casually. Remember that you are being interviewed for a six-figure job, and your potential employer wants to make sure that you will uphold their reputation.
- Be sure to be on time.
- Rehearse your talking points so you can cover your philosophy of care, give some background on your clinical training and your work ethic.
- As you wind up the visit, get clarity on the decision-making process. Find out who will be making the decision and in what time frame. Determine who your main point of contact will be and let them know what your decision-making process is.

Settle on the general business terms before going to the time and expense of hiring an attorney. Once the general business terms have been agreed to, you should expect a formal, legal contract that you can review with your attorney. Don't make the mistake of trying to save on legal fees by doing this yourself. For a few hundred dollars up front, with good legal advice, you can avoid major complications and headaches down the road.

Following these few simple steps should make your selection process easier. If you would like to contact us with specific questions, feel free to do so by either e-mail or telephone.

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