



“Practicing Medicine in Rural America” Survey

Today’s doctor shortage in the United States is most acute in rural America, where approximately 22% of the population lives, but only about 10% of the nation’s physicians practice. An aging U.S. population combined with an increased interest in 'lifestyle' among today’s physicians likely will make the situation worse before it gets better over the next few decades.

With this in mind, physician recruiting firm LocumTenens.com surveyed physicians to better understand their perceptions of practicing medicine in rural America versus in practicing in areas with populations of 50,000 or more. Almost 2,000 physicians from a variety of specialties, geographic locations and practice settings responded.

1,965 physician survey respondents identified the following career characteristics:

Career Status:

- 49% permanently employed
- 10% full-time locum tenens
- 15% permanently employed, some locum tenens
- 12% part-time locum tenens only
- 2.4 % retired
- 11.6% “other”

Practice Setting:

- 25% hospital
- 23% private practice
- 19% self employed/independent contractor working locum tenens
- 12% medical group
- 8% clinic or community health center
- 6% health system
- 7% “other”

Current Location:

- 36% major metro city
- 36% small city/suburban area
- 25% rural area
- 3% not currently practicing

Rural Practice Experience:

- 43% have never worked in a rural area
- 28% work/worked in a rural area full-time
- 29% work/worked in a rural area part-time (LT)

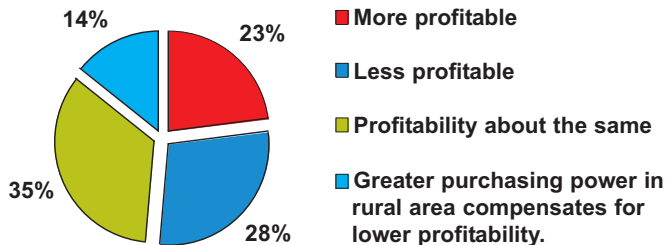
Locum Tenens Experience:

- 53% work, or have worked, locum tenens assignments
- 66% of those accepted assignments in both rural and urban/suburban areas

Comparing Rural and Urban/Suburban Practice: Perceptions of Physicians who HAVE Practiced in Rural Areas

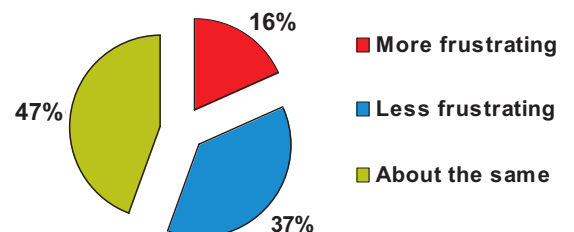
REGARDING PROFITABILITY

How do you think rural practice differs from urban/suburban practice in regards to profitability?



REGARDING FRUSTRATION

How do you think rural practice differs from urban/suburban practice in regards to frustration?

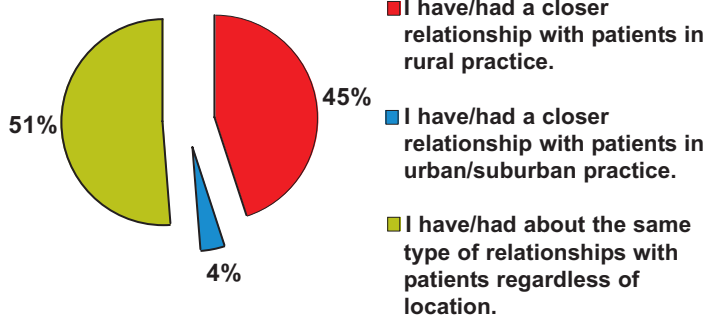


For more information please contact Billie Wickstrom, director of public relations for LocumTenens.com, via email at wickstrom@locumtenens.com or via phone at (888) 268-2456.

Perceptions of Physicians who HAVE Practiced in Rural Areas...continued:

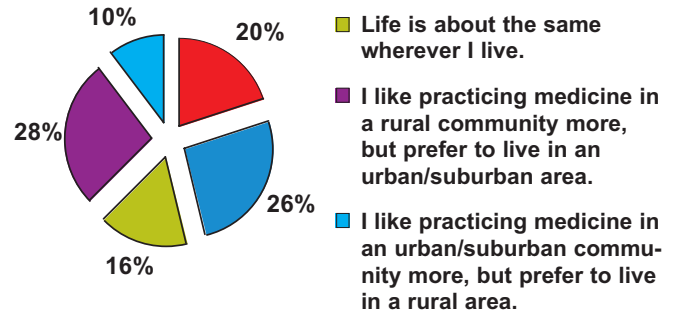
REGARDING DOCTOR/PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

How do you think rural practice differs from urban/suburban practice in regards to doctor/patient relationship?



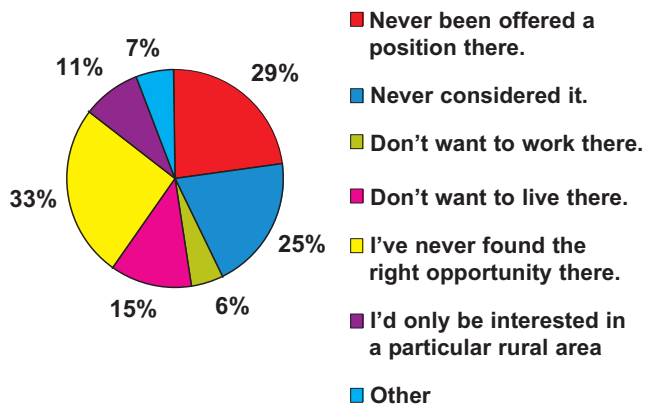
REGARDING LIFESTYLE

How do you think rural practice differs from urban/suburban practice in regards to lifestyle?



Perceptions of Physicians who HAVEN'T Practiced in Rural Areas:

Why haven't you practiced in a rural area?



53% said practicing in rural America is generally more profitable than urban or suburban practice.

47% say rural practice is less profitable.

Regarding Pace:

- 61% think rural practice is slower paced.
- 31% think pace is the same no matter the setting.
- 5% think rural practice is faster paced.
- 3% offered an "other" answer.

Regarding Frustration:

- 43% think rural and urban physicians are equally frustrated.
- 42% think rural physicians are *less* frustrated.
- 15% think rural physicians are *more* frustrated.

LocumTenens.com received **964 comments** about what physicians like most and least about rural medical practice compared to urban/suburban medical practice, and **704 "additional comments"** about living in, or practicing medicine in, a rural area—**1668 comments in total**. The comments included these:

- "The connectedness between components of the care delivery system is closer and easier to navigate in rural areas. I have never found serious drawbacks to rural practice."
- "The size of the town I am in (~11,000) doesn't bother me, but the remoteness of the town does. I have to drive 125 miles to go to a decent restaurant or to the theater."
- "If one is far enough away from the urban setting, the peace and solitude make up for the lack of 'urban' activity."
- "I am enjoying being part of a smaller community at this time... I have found a warmth in the rural area that I did not experience in the cities..."
- "I love living in an area with a slower pace of life where you are not fighting traffic to get to work and where your talents seem to be more appreciated."
- "Small town life appeals to me more than big city life. People are friendlier. More pleasant place to work and live."
- "Don't assume that the physicians are any less qualified, because some of the best surgeons and anesthesiologists are located in rural areas. Living is a lot nicer and less expensive. Shopping and fine dining was severely lacking, unfortunately. Too many Walmarts and not enough Lord and Taylors!"
- "There are multiple informal support systems for patients and physicians. One is a respected member of the community and can make a real difference in overall mental health outcomes and systems."
- "I would prefer not to live in a rural area because I am farther away from cultural events and access to air travel to visit family and friends."
- "I like practicing medicine in a rural area, comparing to an urban setting, because I can provide excellent services to them in a less competitive and less stressful environment."
- "Being raised in a large city and working in an urban area most of my career, I shall just say the rural and urban/suburban are in different orbits."