

Case Study

Imaging Center Upholds Commitment to Patients and Physicians by Planning Ahead to Fill Coverage Gaps

It's an all too common story for many imaging centers and hospitals across the country. The full-time staff physician approaches a well-deserved vacation and the healthcare facility where he works faces the challenge of continuing seamless operations without any lapse in quality patient care while he is out.

Dana Carpenter, RTRM, Operations Manager of four MRI & Imaging of Georgia facilities owned by Medquest Associates faced a similar challenge when her full-time radiologist submitted a request for vacation time. Carpenter's part-time radiologist who handled gaps in coverage had recently retired. "I knew I had to find coverage quickly to keep operations flowing smoothly."

MedQuest is one of the country's leading independent outpatient diagnostic imaging facility operators with a network of more than 90 imaging centers in 13 states that supports other healthcare practices in identifying and diagnosing a broad range of medical conditions. Their mission is to provide the best service, quality, care and value in diagnostic imaging. "As the operations manager, it is a critical part of my job to see that this commitment is carried out daily, and LocumTenens.com helped me to do that."

For the Imaging Center of Warner Robins, Warner Robins, GA, coverage is extremely important because the center is a full modality one. In-house coverage is required for contrast, plain x-rays, and mammography. The facility sees about 50 patients per day and performs an average of 28 MRIs daily. A decision to block the schedule would have resulted in a multitude of problems both operationally and financially. According to Carpenter, contrast coverage is approximately \$4,000 per week, and coupled with other procedures that require an in-house radiologist the cost to block the schedule would have exceeded \$12,000 per day. Finally, proposing a vacation reschedule would have resulted in one unhappy radiologist, and most likely would have lead to retention problems. But, Carpenter also faced a tougher challenge – each of the Medquest facilities are supported by board certified radiologists and a network of fellowship-trained radiology specialists who provide service to referring physicians affiliated with the finest medical institutions in the country; therefore it was critical for the fill-in radiologist to be expertly trained and up to par in all imaging techniques and modalities.

"I read that LocumTenens.com was a niche agency specializing in radiology and I felt there was less risk in putting the pressure on them to find a radiologist that would fit in with our practice needs." Within hours of receiving the call, LocumTenens.com found a radiologist that matched the criteria for the Medquest facility, and a contract was submitted for approval. "I was surprised by the short time it took them to find me coverage. This was my first time using a locum tenens agency and I was afraid it might take a lot longer. I felt prepared, and that really paid off. I was able to give my radiologist a much needed vacation and the facility generated enough revenue to actually offset the cost of locum tenens coverage, resulting in uninterrupted patient care."

"I've built a relationship with several members of the staff and they know my practice needs really well." Carpenter has since recommended LocumTenens.com to the Brunswick, GA facility, where she also oversees operations. "As we grow and merge facilities we'll need more coverage, and I believe that using locum tenens physicians is the way to go." For Dana Carpenter, using LocumTenens.com proved to be a viable solution. And, because Dana acted on her decision to use locum tenens coverage early, she avoided costly alternatives. "I was able to keep the facility running smoothly and efficiently and stand behind our commitment to our affiliate physicians and the community."

Founded in 1995, LocumTenens.com is a full-service physician/CRNA recruiting firm specializing in supplemental placement of radiologists with U.S. hospitals, medical groups and community health centers. LocumTenens.com is part of the Jackson Healthcare Staffing family of companies.