Physician recruiting is a fact of life for any practice. Whether it's replacing a retiring solo practitioner, adding an employee physician to a three-person partnership, or adding additional manpower to a large, multi-specialty clinic, physician recruitment is inevitable and the financial stakes are high.

Bringing a new physician into a practice comes at great financial expense. A 2011 study [1] in the New England Journal of Medicine estimated that hospitals can lose an estimated $150,000-$250,000 a year over the first three years of a physician’s employment. This is due to time it takes a physician to establish themselves, transition their practice and even deal with management challenges. There are also the ramifications of a “poor fit” between a new physician and the practice. In addition, terminating a physician from a practice can be expensive.

How to avoid hiring the wrong physician? While there are no guarantees, there are several tried and true methods to increase the chances of a good fit between a potential hire and your practice.

1. **Read the CV.** Is there a consistent work history? Gaps in work history and/or education should be investigated. Does the CV reflect long, dedicated stretches of work history? Or are there numerous, short-term work episodes? Either may be acceptable depending on what you're hiring for, however, multiple short work assignments may not be what you’re looking for if you’re
looking to hire a physician for the long-term.

2. **Contact References.** Nobody knows how well your potential new hire interacts at work like his/her coworkers. Obtain references from partners and supervising physicians, but also consider other sources as well. Are you hiring an emergency physician? Consider asking the potential hire’s current nurse manager how well that person gets along with the department. Is she respectful not only of the other MDs but also with the nurses and support staff as well? Is her doctoring style one of inclusion or “my way or the highway” management? Which of those works best with the position you are hiring for?

3. **Recruit the Family.** Frequently, hiring a new physician may involve a relocation of that person’s family as well. If you have a physician recruit that is highly desirable consider involving the spouse in the process. Invite the spouse to meet your group and tour your facility. Be prepared to be honest in answering questions about expected time commitments in the new position and recognize that many of the physician recruits will have spouses with career considerations.

4. **Cultural Fit.** This might be the most difficult part of recruiting, but it also might be the most important. You want to improve the chances that the new physician’s work ethics and goals mesh well with your current organization. Is the recruit flexible and willing to learn your practice’s day-to-day operational culture? Are they friendly? Are they focused on the type of practice you’re running? Do they have an interest in the types of patients that your practice focuses on?

5. **Offer Lifestyle Benefits.** In addition to competitive compensation packages, today’s physicians are looking for a work-life balance. Is the expected workload manageable? Do you offer ample vacation time? How does the call schedule work? Lifestyle benefits may help to attract talent and they will also help to avoid physician burnout later.

“You can pay me now or you can pay me later.” The words from the old commercial ring true when it comes to physician recruiting. Time spent on the front end checking references, vetting the CV and assessing the new recruit for cultural fit will pay off by increasing your chances of recruiting a physician who will both fit well with your practice and be a productive partner for years to come.

The information provided in this resource does not constitute legal, medical or any other professional advice, nor does it establish a standard of care. This resource has been created as an aid to you in your practice. The ultimate decision on how to use the information provided rests solely with you, the PolicyOwner.

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