



November 2009

Top Pediatric Subspecialty Shortages

The nation's children's hospitals and medical groups are continuing to experience a shortage in some key pediatric subspecialties with most recruiting in more than one subspecialty area. Our recent recruitment requests and a review of job openings nationwide indicate that the top pediatric subspecialties currently being recruited are:

- Critical Care
- Emergency Medicine
- Gastroenterology
- Hospitalist Medicine
- Neonatology
- Neurology
- Surgery

Other pediatric subspecialties currently in high demand are: Endocrinology, Orthopedics, Cardiology, and Pulmonology.

Reasons for the number of vacancies include:

- In some specialties, the low number of fellowship training slots
- The realization by some pediatricians that several years of additional training will not necessarily increase their income
- Physician lifestyle issues, creating more interest in part-time, shared jobs, less on-call
- Reluctance or inability to move due to the current real estate market

As a result of these shortages, some medical groups and children's hospitals have done without the additional staffing, causing angst and turmoil in medical staffs who feel they are overworked and not properly paid for the extra time. Others have increased their dependency on locum tenens to fill the gap, which can be an expensive proposition if necessary for the long term. In some cases, the shortage has also caused the loss of patient base to providers outside the pediatric environment, resulting in less ancillary service utilization and surgery at pediatric hospitals. Worst of all, the shortage can cause significant delays in treatment due to long waits for appointments, particularly in Endocrinology, Neurology, Cardiology and Gastroenterology. The net effect of this can mean damage to the facility's reputation and a significant reduction in income to the medical practice.

So how can you successfully tackle the pediatric subspecialty physician shortage?

1. **Immediately pursue an aggressive and effective recruitment program.** Use all the resources available to you and consider using the services of an experienced pediatric subspecialty physician search firm. Their ability to fill the position quickly will often make up for the expense.
2. **Design a competitive financial package to attract quality candidates.** This is not the time to ruminate on what the salary level "used to be". You must show candidates your commitment to a quality program by offering them a competitive financial package, including enhancements such as signing bonuses and/or educational loan repayment schedules.

3. **Don't delay!** Have you computed how much your facility is losing every day you don't have this subspecialist available? Take into account the:
 - Cost of locum tenens
 - Cost of additional on-call payments
 - Loss of income from hospital utilization
 - Loss of revenue from other hospital services
 - Cost of continued recruitment advertising
 - Unhappiness of referring physicians
 - Loss of reputation in the community by not providing the services of the subspecialist

For the latest tips in developing a subspecialty specific recruitment package and program, please contact us.

Top 10 Tips for Maximizing Candidate Telephone Interviews

After receiving curriculum vitae or resumé responses to an open position and selecting your top candidates, the next step is to conduct telephone interviews. Here are 10 tips for maximizing telephone interviews:

1. Define your goals ahead of time. Make a list of criteria for the position and use the list to prepare your telephone questions. This will help you evaluate if the candidate meets your hiring goals and it will ensure that each candidate is fairly assessed.
2. Don't delay in contacting candidates of interest! Competition is fierce for the best candidates, so by not acting quickly, you are leaving the door open for your competitors. To minimize this risk, contact the candidate the same day you receive the CV/resumé (even if it is just to set an appointment).
3. Make the phone interview the most important item on your calendar. You will impress a candidate by scheduling an appointment for the call. Also, let candidates know the expected length of the call so they can plan accordingly.
4. Just prior to the call, take time to again review the candidate's CV and become familiar with their education, experience and their interests outside of medicine. It is important to refer to these items during the conversation, as it is an indication of your interest as well as your attention to detail.
5. Initiate the call with pleasantries by briefly discussing the weather, sports, an appropriate current event or another topic to break the ice and create an interest. This will make both of you more comfortable throughout the conversation.
6. After pleasantries, describe the position including duties, hours, call responsibilities, colleagues, and place(s) of service. Explain why you are recruiting and briefly discuss the goals and criteria for the position.
7. Briefly and honestly (but not negatively) describe any challenges that resulted in the decision to hire. Also, don't dwell on, but never hide, problems that might be obvious during a site visit. Your fair and honest assessment of the opportunity can preclude future surprises or disappointments. And remember, the challenges can actually be *opportunities* for the candidates considering your position.
8. Review the CV/resumé for evidence of achievement in their specific field including awards, research grants, publications, and other accomplishments.
9. Next, ask the candidate to visualize and discuss how he or she would see themselves in the position. If it is favorable, sell the candidate on your practice and community. You will have

learned by now what their professional and personal needs are, so provide specifics about how you see them matching your criteria and fitting into the community.

10. Last, invite the candidate to ask questions, and then ask for honest feedback on the candidate's perception and interest in the opportunity. If it is positive and the candidate meets your defined criteria, **invite the candidate to interview and set a date**. If the feedback is negative, but you are interested in the candidate, don't give up. **Take time to probe further** to determine if there is a misconception about anything or if simply the job and/or the community are not a fit. If it is obvious that the candidate does not meet your criteria or has minimal interest, thank the candidate for his or her time and politely end the call.

For more information on how to maximize candidate telephone interviews, please contact us.

Compensation Corner

2009 Mean Compensation for Pediatric Surgeons (based on 2008 data)

Group Practice: \$475,000

Academic Practice

Assistant Professor: \$350,000

Associate Professor: \$410,000

Professor: \$420,000

*In the next issue of **Passion 4 Pediatrics**, we'll discuss maximizing Pediatric Radiology recruitment and the Top 10 Questions to Ask During a Site Visit.*

Brought to you by:



4200 Somerset Dr. Ste 256
Prairie Village, KS 66208
913-341-7117 | 800-533-0525
<http://www.sherriff.com>

Subscribe to this newsletter (We will not share your email address with third parties)

http://www.sherriff.com/pediatric_e-news.cfm

© 2009 Sherriff & Associates, Inc. All Rights Reserved.