

Doctors Express (Malden, MA)

Meeting urgent care staffing needs with locum tenens

Doctors Express in Malden, Massachusetts, is a growing urgent care franchise. Its mission is to deliver high-quality, low-cost care in which patients see a physician every visit. Scott Sheridan is the owner of the Doctors Express in Malden, which has been operating for about one year. According to Sheridan, he opened his facility to about nine patients per day, and now sees about 30 patients per day. For coverage, he started out by hiring one full-time physician and a few part-timers to run the facility, which is open weekdays 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and weekends 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Today he has two physicians (one full-time and one part-time), which gives him about 95% coverage. For the 5% gap, Sheridan relies on locum tenens.

Challenge

Anticipating his need for coverage as his franchise grew and per his facility operating plan, Sheridan said it was time to hire another physician to cover the gaps in his schedule. He found and hired a physician himself, who came on board to cover three weekends a month. However, the physician was soon offered a fellowship and left Doctors Express. Sheridan said that he knows the qualities he wants in a doctor and prefers to do the job hunting and hiring himself. What he doesn't like is to be rushed in making a hiring decision. So to fill the schedule gaps left by his newly departed hire, Sheridan decided to use a staffing company to find a locum while he hunted unhurriedly for his part-time physician.

Partnership

Sheridan said after deciding to use a locum tenens staffing company to find a temporary doctor, he perused an informal list of recommended staffing companies that was put together by fellow Doctors Express owners. One of the recommended companies on that list was AMN Healthcare, so Sheridan gave them a call.

Solution

AMN came through for Sheridan and found an excellent fit for his urgent care center.

"When I work with locums, I prefer someone who has worked at another Doctors Express," said Sheridan. "So the locum from AMN Healthcare, who we now use quite a bit, worked at one of the Doctors Express centers before coming here. She is very familiar with our EMR systems and our patient flow. Finding her made it an easy transition."

By using AMN Healthcare to find high-quality locum tenens, Sheridan can now take his time finding the right candidate for his urgent care facility.

Using a locum from AMN Healthcare also saved Sheridan a steep fee from another permanent placement company he talked to. Sheridan recently interviewed a doctor to work one weekend a month, and the placement fee was over \$11,000. The number of weeks the doctor would have to work to make up the placement fee didn't make sense.

Finally, Sheridan said that getting a doctor with Doctors Express experience certainly helped, "because if we have to close because of lack of coverage, that would be a disaster."

"I am very satisfied knowing AMN Healthcare can find someone when I have an opening and it saves me from having to engage and spend time with other locum companies," said Sheridan. "AMN is very easy to work with. They have been more of a partner than other locum companies I've used. They check in every week with me."

Results

Sheridan hadn't used many locums previously, but says his experience with AMN Healthcare has made temporary healthcare workers a viable solution for future openings. He appreciates the constant contact and advice from AMN, which has been very helpful. Also, Sheridan said he is very busy with his growing business, so it was important to find a staffing company he could trust and to go to without hesitation when he needs help immediately.

As an example to finding the right company and sticking with them, Sheridan recalled taking a call from another locum company. They said they had an available doctor for dates Sheridan needed. Sheridan asked if the doctor candidate had experience working at Doctors Express. The answer was yes so Sheridan reached out to the Doctors Express owner who worked with the doctor candidate. And although the owner confirmed that the doctor candidate had worked there, he also told Sheridan that the doctor candidate was soon fired. Sheridan said, "What's more disappointing: that the locum company sent a candidate who was fired or that they never checked the candidate's history and didn't know about it?"

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Sheridan said that the biggest stressor in his job is the fear a doctor won't show up.

"Why urgent care has been so effective across the county is that we do things differently than emergency rooms," he said. "Our urgent care is an experience. You walk in and there is no sliding glass door separating you from the registration desk. We don't throw a clipboard in your face and tell you to just sit down. We push customer service. When you walk in we have a 60-inch flat screen TV, snacks, water and soft drinks, and we treat people nice. I tell all the doctors I work with and interview that good medical care and good customer service are not mutually exclusive. We expect you to have a great bedside manner. We want people to come back. And staffing is a big part of this — that we have enough staff to always meet the needs of the patients. And by using AMN Healthcare, these requirements are met."

To learn more about AMN Urgent Care Staffing Services, call **(866) 352-5959** or visit www.amnhealthcare.com/urgentcare



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