

### **Part V: Interviewing with the Hospital**

Working as a traveling physical therapist, occupational therapist, or speech language pathologist is a tremendously exciting way to earn a living. Seeing the country; working a variety of clinical settings; in many ways it can't be beat. In order to achieve this lifestyle, it is important that you do the work necessary to set yourself up for the perfect assignment. In this article, we'll discuss your interview with the hospital, skilled nursing facility, or other acute care centers.

The first step in preparing for any traveling therapist assignment is to do your research. It is important that you not only understand the position and all it involves, but also prepare to demonstrate your best qualities and to have your answers planned for those tricky interview questions. While you may have an idea of the job and its details, you need to spend some time with your recruiter to get the full view of the job at hand.

#### **What to Expect:**

When interviewing for any job, there are several expectations and recommendations that you must understand before actually going to the interview. It is important to employers to see interviewees that are not only aware of their own skills and benefits that they bring to the table, but that they also have pertinent information about the position and company that they are interviewing with. To insure that you meet these interviewing expectations, you must understand the position and its expectations, as well as what the hospital is looking for in a candidate.

#### **Understanding the Position:**

When talking with your recruiter, there are a number of items you must cover to get a full understanding of the job. First and foremost, you need to find out the name and position of the person you will be interviewing with at the hospital. You also need to check that you have the correct time and phone number of the interviewer. Your recruiter will help you discover the details of the job, but make sure you communicate it back to them to make sure everyone's on the same page. Confirm all of the primary details and share the remaining questions you have. Your recruiter will fill in the rest of the gaps with the information they have available and work to prepare you for the interview.

They should cover specifics about the environment of the job; the number of people on staff (assistant/techs), who you would report to daily, the specifics of the caseload, including the number of patients you would be tending to each day, daily expectations, productivity requirements, and what shifts you would be expected to work. It is important to know if weekend rotation is required, whether or not you will have to work overtime, or even if you would have to work outside of the previously agreed schedule.

You must also understand why the position is open. Do not hesitate to ask your recruiter. Reasons may be due to seasonality demand, FMLA, or that the hospital may not have been able to find the right performance candidate. Recruiters should also relay any soft skills or areas of interest that the manager may have shared when the job order was being taken.

#### **What the Hospital is Looking for:**

Hospitals are not only looking for the position requirements to be fulfilled and for a candidate to have the clinical experience necessary, but also someone who is adaptable and able to handle a large and fluctuating work load. The hospital is looking for candidates that are able to integrate well with the current team and structure, be a great communicator, and handle issues responsibly. They must be ethical and hardworking. So, when being considered for a traveling therapy position, it is important to understand these qualities and make sure that your personality and background hold up to the requirements.

#### **Common Interview Questions:**

Once you know the expectations of the job, it is time to get your interview underway. Before you go the interview, you should make a list of commonly asked questions and an example answer of what you may share with your interviewer. In order to look prepared and knowledgeable about the job, it is important to continue practicing the answers to the following common interview questions:

1. Tell me about your experience.
2. In what types of clinical settings have you worked before?
3. What type of caseload are you accustomed to?
4. What conditions are you most experienced at treating?
5. How long have you been traveling?
6. What equipment are you experienced with?
7. Has most of your work experience been with younger or older patients?

These are just some of the questions that the hiring authority will ask. There will be more. Work with your recruiter to anticipate as many of them as you can and prepare in advance.

### **Standing Out From the Crowd:**

Keep in mind that an interview is not just an opportunity for the hiring authority to get to know you. It's also your chance to get the information you need about the job to make your best decision. First and foremost, you want to stand out from the crowd. Each answer you give must work to make you the most attractive candidate. To do this, make sure that you effectively communicate your flexibility. Employers like to see that you are flexible on time and job responsibilities. You should also come into the interview with a list of well-thought out and effective questions for your interviewer. This shows that you are not only well prepared with a lot of background information, but that you are also engaged and excited about the job. Do not be afraid to show your expertise in the area! Show this through your answers, your questions, and general conversation throughout the interview.

In addition, it is extremely important that you show professionalism throughout the entire interview process. Ask and answer questions intelligently, treat the interviewer as an expert and engage them in thoughtful conversation. One of the best tools for standing out is often not the answers you give but the questions you ask.

### **Negotiations with Your Recruiter:**

Your compensation and benefits package should be as close to settled with your recruiter before you interview. Make sure you've covered your pay, benefits, housing, transportation and other elements of the job, and have agreements in place before the hospital interview.

### **Final Considerations for the Job Offer:**

Before you actually accept the job offer, make sure that you consider all of the aspects within the job. Make sure that you ask about the start and end dates. Ask your recruiter and the hiring authority if the hospital has ever terminated assignments early or if they ever extend assignments. This is important to make sure that you are not stuck in the case of emergency and the potential for contract extension could work out well for everyone if the assignment goes well. Before you accept the job, you must make sure that you have the answers to these questions. Without them, you may not be as informed as you need to be in the case of an emergency or if something out of the ordinary occurs.

### **Preparing for Day 1:**

Now that you've successfully passed the test and accepted the position, it is time to prepare for your first day on your new travel assignment. Do you have your travel and housing details worked out? All of these items need to be handled before you depart. Do you have confirmations for everything? Be sure to establish who pays for what, contingency plans if a flight is missed or a rental car is not available, or if you are delayed for any reason.

Make sure that you also know when you can move in to your temporary housing and when you must vacate. Give yourself plenty of time before your first day so that you can get settled before you start. Once you are settled in to your temporary housing, be sure to get a good night's sleep and prepare yourself to get up early and show up early to your first day. Bring your assignment agreements and a photo ID with you to your first day and confirm everything during your orientation.

Throughout your first day, be sure to communicate with your supervisor and recruiter, and then again at the end of the first week. Constant communication with these individuals will make your work life a lot easier and more effective, and that any small issues can be resolved quickly.

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### **About MDI Medical**

MDI Medical, a Cirrus, Inc. company, is a JCAHO certified, national healthcare staffing company located in Atlanta, GA. We specialize in contract and permanent placement of rehabilitation therapists and other allied healthcare professionals. MDI Medical's sister company, Cirrus Medical Staffing, LLC, provides national travel and permanent placement for nurses. Cirrus Medical Staffing, LLC is ranked as one of the top 10 travel nurse companies in the U.S. In addition, Cirrus and MDI Medical provide international staffing augmentation services to our client facilities through our sister company, Medtivia. Medtivia is continuously ranked the most outstanding nurse and therapist recruitment organization of Filipino nurses.

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