

Part VI: Negotiating with Your Recruiter

Whether you have just begun your search or are in the process of setting up an interview with a facility, negotiating with your recruiter early in the process is an important step toward finding that perfect physical therapy, occupational therapy or speech language pathology assignment. You'll need to cover travel and housing arrangements, shifts, hourly rate, overtime pay, & any bonuses that may be available. In some cases it is pretty cut and dried; there's a limit to what we can offer and the hospital client may have left no room for any creative negotiations. In many others, however, your recruiter can be the key to turning an assignment that sounds 'so so' into one that works out wonderfully for you.

Therapy Travelers: We're on Your Side

After many years in the physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy staffing business, it's quite likely that we've heard it all in our efforts to help therapists find the best travel jobs. A common misconception that exists is the belief by some that the recruiter is "holding out" on pay or other assignment benefits. Believe it or not, your recruiter is motivated to give you as much as s/he can. The rehabilitation therapy market is extremely competitive and there aren't too many factories pumping out new therapists! The relationships we have with you are tremendously important to us and to be totally honest, we want to keep you servicing MDI Medical's client facilities. If there is room in the contract to pay you more, we'll find it. If we can offer better housing, we will. Your recruiter wants to help you create a compensation package that is as fair and compelling as possible.

Study the Details

Ever see an assignment on one website offering an unbelievable pay rate and then your recruiter calls with an opportunity that sounds identical but the pay is different? Look closely. In many cases, the first glance at an assignment can leave most travelers seeing a clear difference in compensation. Upon a further review, however, the package can actually be quite similar. Are both companies offering a straight hourly rate or is one of them a blended rate? A typical travel compensation package includes some or all of the following:

- Hourly wages
- Overtime wages
- Housing or housing allowance
- Daily per diem
- Rental car or car allowance
- Licensure reimbursement
- Completion bonuses
- PTO programs
- Benefits

What we see many travel companies do is add all of these items together to advertise a blended rate. On the surface it looks much higher than what anyone else is paying, but there are many creative ways to make an hourly pay rate look attractive. The fact of the matter is that most clients pay the same rates to staffing companies. In the end the true pay rate offered by most staffing firms is going to be pretty similar.



Want to maximize your take home pay? Consider making your own travel & housing arrangements & taking the allowance. Many property managers will give an individual a better rate than even a staffing company can get with volume discounts. Travel with a friend and share the apartment.

In addition, taking advantage of per diems can be a great way to pay for your trip. Just be careful the money you're getting doesn't exceed IRS guidelines. Be aware that there's a lot of heightened attention these days to ensure that payments to travelers, in particular the per diem and/or any allowances paid, follow IRS guidelines. Ask your recruiter about this and check www.IRS.gov for the information you need. If you're getting too much of your income in non-taxable monies, chances are you could be subject to paying taxes at year end or worse, pay an IRS fine. It pays to do your homework.

It's Only a Good Assignment If It's Right for You

It is important to mention that what's right for some might not be right for all. Keep in mind that your discussions with your recruiter might not only be about maximizing take home pay – unless you've told us that's all you care about. We work to address each of the needs you've shared with us. Some of the most common needs we've met for our travelers include:

- Special time off
- Traveling with a pet
- Traveling with family
- Multi-stop travel plans
- Unique work schedules

Discuss these and any other needs you may have with your recruiter early in the process and make sure you're on the same page as the communications progress.

Chances are good that you are competing with other travelers for that assignment and clients expect that you have spoken about these items by the time you interview.

Make it Yours with Your Recruiter's Help

Many of our traveling therapists choose the mobile lifestyle to maximize their incomes, while countless others enjoy the freedom to do what they love in several locations each year. Whatever it is that you're seeking, your recruiter can help you make the most of it with a selection of assignments and travel, housing, pay and benefit options that make your career well – yours.

About MDI Medical

MDI Medical, a Cirrus Medical Staffing, 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 as the most outstanding nurse and therapist recruitment organization of Filipino nurses.

Find out more at www.MDIMedical.com or call 866-518-1750.

