

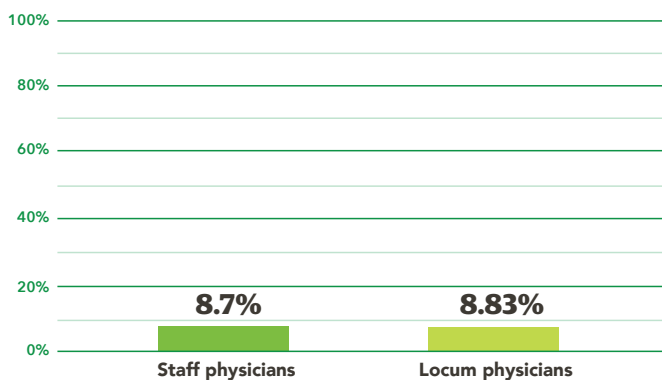
Quality of care: Locum tenens vs. staff physicians

Patients should receive the same quality of care whether they're being seen by a staff physician or a locum tenens provider. Recent studies compared patient outcomes for locum tenens and employed physicians and found that outcomes were similar for both provider types. In addition, one study found that costs to the healthcare facility were lower for those patients being seen by locum tenens providers.

Comparing mortality rates, readmissions, and length of patient stay

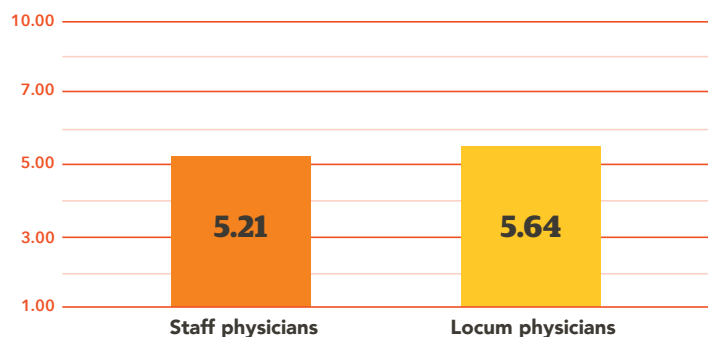
One study led by Harvard Medical School researchers examined mortality rates of almost two million Medicare beneficiaries hospitalized between 2009 and 2014. They found that those treated by locum tenens physicians had similar mortality rates as those treated by staff physicians.¹

30-day mortality rate



The study also found that patients cared for by locum tenens physicians had slightly lower 30-day readmissions than those seen by staff physicians, but the length of stay in days was marginally longer for locum physicians.

Length of stay in days



Locum tenens providers are associated with lower hospital costs

A second study conducted by the University of Toledo College of Medicine and ProMedica found that patients treated by locum tenens physicians had shorter hospital stays and lower hospital costs.²

The study also confirmed Harvard's study that mortality rates were similar whether a patient was treated by a locum tenens or staff physician.

Researchers also found that patients seen only by locum tenens were associated with an adjusted length of stay of one day shorter, with an adjusted average hospital cost saving of \$1,339 per hospitalization.



\$1,339

savings per hospitalization with locums

Productivity of locum physicians compared

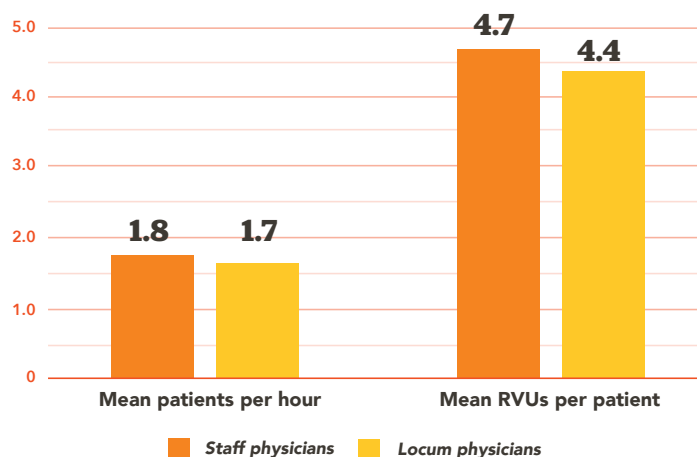
A third study conducted by the U.S. Acute Care Solutions Research Group between January 2021 and July 2023 found that during the first 100 days of an assignment, the mean patients per hour and RVUs for locum physicians were moderately lower compared to staff physicians.³

While it takes time for locum tenens physicians to familiarize themselves with new facilities and processes, the study found that, similar to the other studies, there were no statistical differences in returns, admissions, length of stay, or procedures.

Locum tenens physicians provide quality care

Studies show that the quality of patient care provided by locum tenens physicians compares favorably to that of staff physicians. These results should foster confidence in healthcare facilities that utilize locum tenens physicians to cover gaps in coverage. Locum tenens physicians are as knowledgeable, skilled, and concerned about the quality of patient care they deliver as staff physicians.

Physician productivity



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1. Blumenthal OM, Olenski AR, Tsugawa Y, Jena AB. Association Between Treatment by Locum Tenens Internal Medicine Physicians and 30-Day Mortality Among Hospitalized Medicare Beneficiaries. *JAMA*. 2017;318(21):2119-2129. doi:10.1001/jama.2017.17925.
2. Mustafa Ali, M.K., Sabha, M.M., Mustafa, S.K. et al. Hospitalization and Post Hospitalization Outcomes Among Teaching Internal Medicine, Employed Hospitalist, and Locum Tenens Hospitalist Services in a Tertiary Center: a Prospective Cohort Study. *J GEN INTERN MED* 36, 3040-3051 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-020-06578-4>.
3. Nikolla DA, Zocchi MS, Black BS, Oskvarek JJ, Burke LG, Kachman MM, Moghtaderi A, Rahman N, Bedolla J, Carlson JN, Pines JM; US Acute Care Solutions Research Group. Differences in Productivity and Clinical Care Between Permanent Staff, Employed Travel, and Locum Tenens Emergency Physicians. *Ann Emerg Med*. 2025 May 13:S0196-0644(25)00203-3. doi: 10.1016/j.annemergmed.2025.04.010.