

Description

Physicians should develop their schedules 3 to 6 months in advance and post schedules at least 1-2 months in advance so physicians have early notice of the unfilled shifts

Benefits

- Provides to the physicians and the hospital, an early indication of available shifts
- Decreases the occurrence of last minute staffing challenges
- Provides better picture for use of locums – the more advance notice they receive, the better the chance of filling a position (ensure locum commitment and commitment to locums)
- Provides better opportunity for balancing the “good” shifts with the “bad” shifts amongst physicians and locums

Challenges

- Requires a stable and committed ED physician group
- Requires significant time commitment by the ED Chief/Chief of Staff to work on a 3-6 month scheduling calendar

Recommendation

1. Focus first on overcoming short-term staffing needs
2. Fill single coverage shifts first, then fill double coverage shifts
3. Post the schedule in advance and clearly indicate which shifts are open
4. Be flexible with shift hours (e.g. when short an 8 hour shift in any 24 hour timeline, consider two 12 hour shifts)
5. Pre-plan vacation, weekend and holiday coverage, including rotating and staggering vacations
6. When offered, accept assistance for shorter shifts and when possible, extend the length of other shifts
7. When gaps have been identified, fill hard to fill shifts first