



In July of 2009, OHSU's Area Health Education Center (AHEC) began exploring alternative methods of locum tenens provision, ensuring temporary or short-term primary care access to rural communities, facilities and medical practices. Many communities recognized commercial options of locum tenens as unaffordable and often providing care not compatible with the needs of rural populations. Our mission, in partnering with rural communities to address these issues, led us to a cooperative model of locums provision. The Oregon Locum Tenens Cooperative (OLTC) was launched in January 2011. The model's primary benefits include:

Community-based and Membership Directed. The cooperative model allows facilities and communities to build a program that best suits their needs using locums to address both long and short-term health system goals.

Centralized Posting and Direct Contracting. The OLTC office centrally posts openings, reaching a wide audience of potential locums physicians. The cost of locums services remains low through permitting each member to maintain the individual contract and compensation arrangements.

Physicians familiar with rural practice, scope of care and available resources. The rural nature of our State requires providers comfortable with patient care in settings of limited local resources. The OLTC uses Oregon physicians who understand the territory.

No-cost recruitment for practices. As a program service, should a site be successful in recruiting a locums provider to a permanent position, the OLTC looks upon that as a success. Our goal is maintaining or improving access to care in communities.

Building Primary Care Workforce. Through connections with OHSU, OAFP, Oregon AHEC and national recruitment capacity with the central OLTC office, optimal connections can be made with potential locums providers. Locums options can be used to help draw recruits to Oregon and connect them with communities.

Program Summary

Functions the OLTC program office. As a central point to post locum tenens openings, the program office maintains and manages the coverage requests of OLTC members. Its primary asset is the locum tenens workforce built via social networks and affiliated organizations. Each participating provider has primary verification completed, assuring his or her qualifications. Members can access this credentialing data and past placement satisfaction surveys to more quickly make decisions on providers electing to take assignments.

Who are the members? The founding members are composed of several Oregon critical access hospitals and rural practices. Expansion of membership is to any health facility or physician practice in a rural or underserved community, through approval of the OLTC governing board. Members pay an annual membership fee based upon practice or facility size to access OLTC services. Medical malpractice for locums is typically covered through a member's existing policies or by negotiating a per-diem with their representatives.

How does it work? Up to six months in advance, any member site can request coverage through the OLTC program office. Postings include location, type of coverage, scope of care, dates of coverage and total compensation. Locum tenens providers can view available openings through regular postings (web-enablement in development) and request dates to provide needed coverage. Once a provider indicates interest in a coverage location and date(s), the program office connects the site with the individual's name and credentials. After the work is completed, the site submits provider satisfaction surveys for use by future OLTC members. All compensation for direct care services is completed between the site and physician.

Program Development and Administration

Initial funding for development was provided through the Oregon Community Foundation and continued through AHEC and OHSU support. Although the program is member supported through annual fees, we are actively seeking rate relief and subsidy partners in our mission to address temporary practice coverage needs and expand rural Oregon's primary care workforce capacities.

The Oregon Locum Tenens Cooperative (OLTC) has been operational since July of 2010, the first six months on a trial basis and beginning January 1, 2011, under the new OLTC membership-based model. The tiered membership model provides base funding for OLTC operations, permitting all members' equal access to services. Since inception, the OLTC has arranged 10,077 hours of coverage in conjunction with 27 sites across Oregon.

More information can be accessed through the OLTC Program Office

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Oregon Locum Tenens Cooperative (OLTC) Organizational Diagram

