

Finding the right partner for physician staffing

Learn how UPMC (one of the country's largest healthcare systems) revolutionized its physician staffing process.



Big, Complicated, and Costly

As the largest non-governmental employer in Pennsylvania and the largest medical insurer in western Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) was struggling with physician staffing shortages. They dealt with this problem the way hospitals all over the U.S. deal with it: they spent a lot of money with locum tenens agencies to fill the gaps.

This approach was not sustainable in the long term though. UPMC needed a way to keep costs under control without letting critical services lines go understaffed. In October of 2021, UPMC re-launched its internal locum float pool, this time with Syncx. With the Syncx Float Pool Program, the process became automated, streamlined, and intuitive, allowing for an organization-wide view of available physicians and their locations.

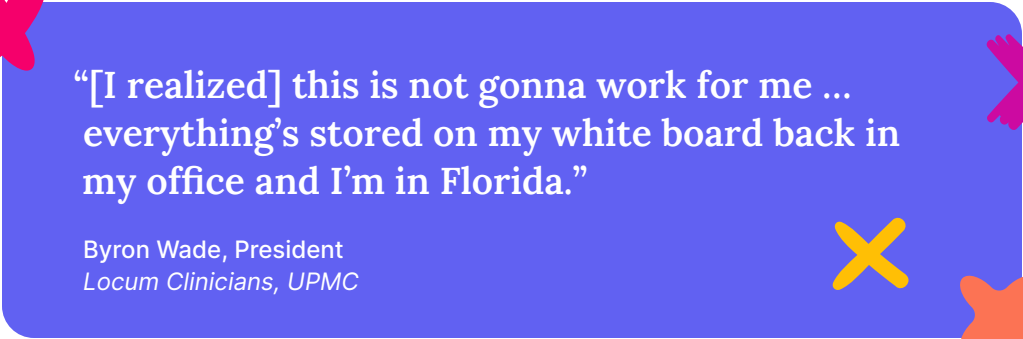
UPMC at a Glance

- Largest non-governmental employer in PA
- Largest medical insurer in western PA
- > 92,000 employees
- 40 hospitals
- 800 doctors' offices and outpatient sites
- 4 million insured

This can't live on a whiteboard.

In 2018, UPMC launched an internal locum program to identify and deploy internal physicians to fill staffing gaps, rather than rely solely on locum agencies. This program was a good start toward solving their staffing issues but the process turned out to be intensely manual, time consuming, and not scalable. One event in 2019 brought this challenge home to Byron Wade, UPMC's President of Locum Clinicians.

In an emergency at one of UPMC's hospitals, the neurosurgeon on call was unable to come in. Byron needed to track down a replacement, fast. All the information he needed to find an available locum was handwritten on a whiteboard in his office. The problem? Byron wasn't in his office.



“[I realized] this is not gonna work for me ... everything's stored on my white board back in my office and I'm in Florida.”

Byron Wade, President
Locum Clinicians, UPMC

Though they were able to solve the problem at that moment, the team at UPMC needed a better way to house all locum data in a single place that was accessible to anyone regardless of their physical location. UPMC needed a truly integrated view of its internal physician float pools and external locum availability to understand how best to deploy their resources in a cost-effective manner without compromising patient care.

Searching for the Complete Physician Talent Solution

When UPMC began searching for staffing management partners, they wanted more than a standalone MSP/VMS solution for their locum tenens.

Large health system seeks a supportive staffing partner who:

- Is committed to providing an integrated, comprehensive view of the entire physician workforce (i.e., external locums, internal float pools, and permanent hiring)
- Finds joy in reducing manual processes and streamlining operations
- Understands the importance of vendor neutrality
- Has a passion for providing a single source of truth
- Knows how to scale and augment physician staffing programs
- Lays awake thinking of ways to reduce our costs while maintaining quality patient care







After thoroughly vetting several potential partners, it was clear that Syncx was the only partner to meet all of UPMC's criteria.

You had me at hellosyncx.com

In October of 2021, UPMC launched its internal locum float pool program with Syncx. This gave UPMC the chance to train its people on the new process and systems and get more comfortable. The initial benefits of this launch were realized quickly. Not only was the internal locum process now much more streamlined and automated, it also created an organization-wide view of which physicians were available, and when and where they were available.

Then, in January of 2022, they transitioned all external/ agency locums to the Syncx MSP Program.

This second phase of the process was especially important for cost control because it allowed UPMC to standardize:

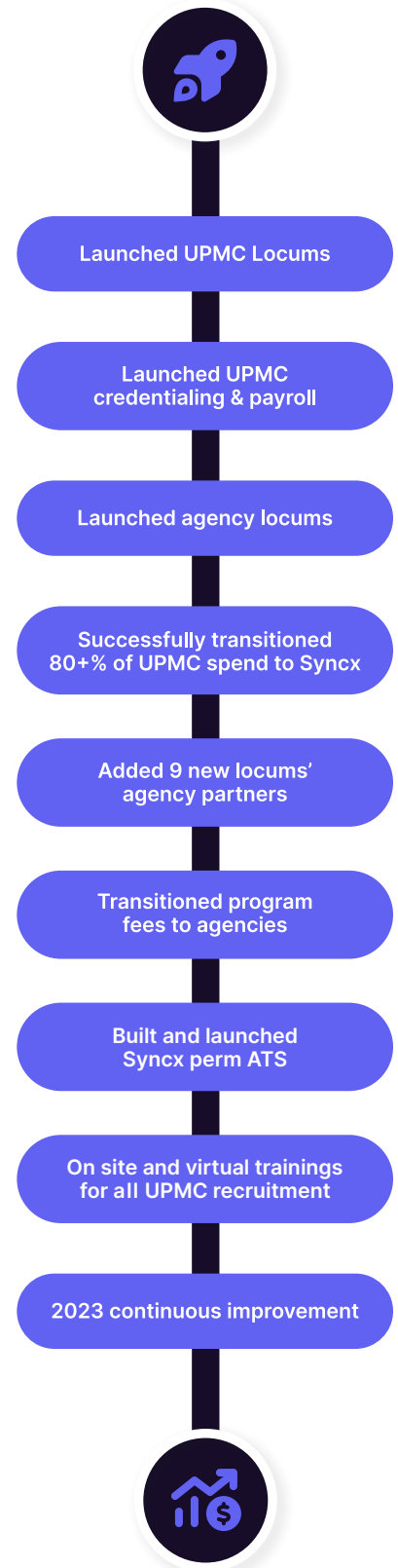
-  Rates
-  Contract terms
-  Locum usage
-  Department usage

As the rollout progressed, the team at UPMC made use of the data they were collecting to give leaders better insight into how they could optimize their physician staffing.

“We don’t make those decisions for them, but we can help make suggestions and help drive ... sustainable financial practices.” said Byron. “And I think before that ... people didn’t realize how [many agency] locums they were using ... you just fill the gap, and you move on with your life.”

“It was all about good communication. It was about the foundation that [was built on] our relationships with Syncx ... [they did] a good job of being on site, making sure that we spent time together”

Byron Wade, President
Locum Clinicians, UPMC



Float pool management and MSP: A modern classic

The integration of UPMC's internal float pool and its external locum data was a powerful combination in its own right because it created opportunities to make better, more strategic decisions about how to fill shifts. For example, if UPMC was consistently deploying locums to a single location or cluster of locations, that was a good indicator that it was time to start recruiting for a permanent physician in that area.

But what about all those permanent physician hires?

Building on the successful rollout of the Syncx float pool management and MSP locum solutions, UPMC launched Syncx's ATS offering to manage permanent physician hiring. This final piece of the puzzle enabled UPMC's recruiters to manage the candidate lifecycle for physicians.

Amplified capabilities, simplified processes, better visibility, and lower costs



Expanded capabilities and efficiency

- Staffed 400+ clinicians in 2022
- Brought in 10 new locum provider agencies, building a stronger panel overall with expanded access to specialties
- Replaced higher priced agencies who were reluctant to participate in this process improvement initiative
- Improved visibility and reporting (e.g., can see shift count and spend by region, provider, facility, specialty, and vendor)
- Provided visibility to future spend for planning and budgeting

“I have a small team, so it really helped us ... that we didn't have to manage our third-party locum agencies as much, and we could spend time recruiting [internally]”

Byron Wade, President
Locum Clinicians, UPMC



Achieved more than \$3M in cost savings

- Transitioned 85+% of UPMC locum/float pool spend to Syncx
- Worked with smaller, lower overhead agencies so Syncx could be flexible and consultative while reducing costs
- Used market rate data and standardized rates across the UPMC system **saving ~6%** compared to average industry rates
- **Realized \$2.3M in float pool savings with over \$1M incremental savings** coming from gained efficiencies through the Syncx technology solution
- 42% of UPMC locum agencies are minority- or women-owned businesses, while almost half are small businesses

A brighter future to the power of three

What's next for an already fruitful partnership? For now, UPMC and Syncx are integrating these three programs with advanced technology to improve speed, efficiency, and reduce costs. UPMC's shared purpose with Syncx has been instrumental in positioning UPMC for success in a non-conventional way.

Not only did they gather the low(er) hanging fruit of integrating their internal float pool management process with their use of external/agency sourced locum tenens, they also reaped the benefits of deploying an ATS for permanent physician hires. The goal is for UPMC to see the entire spectrum of physician talent in one place, with a single source of truth and use that data to ensure that **shifts aren't just getting filled, they're being optimally filled.**

“[Working with] Syncx is like having a pool of experts in your back pocket”

Byron Wade, President
Locum Clinicians, UPMC

This story doesn't stop with UPMC though, optimizing your deployment of disparate sources of medical talent in this way will not only reduce costs but improve the quality of care you provide overall.



Lessons learned

- Standardizing your processes for locums/float pool management sets you free to focus on strategic concerns like permanent hiring and long-term planning
- Simplify your locum process as much as you can for everyone involved (e.g., administrators, other physicians, etc.)
- Don't underestimate the power of having one point of contact for locum staffing
- Make new platforms/processes the path of least resistance for users
- When you have accurate data on your side, it's a lot easier to get support for future initiatives
- Once you start, you'll wish you started sooner!



Ready to evolve and optimize your physician staffing ecosystem?

Just because healthcare staffing is hard, doesn't mean it has to be.

Want to learn more about how the Syncx Float Pool Management, Locum MSP, and permanent hire ATS enable you to reduce costs, increase performance, and drive retention? Visit hellosyncx.com or call 866-HISYNCX.