

Transcript Details

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Locum Tenens & Beyond: Exploring One Clinician's Efforts In & Out of New Orleans

Announcer:

You're Listening to *Spotlight On Locum Tenens* on ReachMD in partnership with Locumstory.com.

Dr. Caudle:

Welcome to *Spotlight on Locum Tenens* on ReachMD. I'm your host, Dr. Jennifer Caudle, and joining me today to discuss his experiences working as a locum tenens is pediatric physical rehabilitation physician, Dr. Maurice Sholas. Dr. Sholas, thanks so much for being here today.

Dr. Sholas:

Thank you, Dr. Caudle, for having me. I'm so excited to be on your program.

Dr. Caudle:

Well, we're excited that you're here. And you know, before we dive into your locum tenens experiences, Dr. Sholas, I'd like to begin by focusing on the important work you're doing in the New Orleans community. Can you tell us about some of your initiatives, and their goals?

Dr. Sholas:

Sure. I've founded a group called [emPOWER NOLA](#). We are online, and what we do is we are Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Fellowship Group, and we are using our culture barriers here in the city and pairing them with educators and mental health professionals in the school system. Through that didactic, we're actually creating trauma informed spaces for kids living here in the metro area in New Orleans.

Dr. Caudle:

That's excellent, and thanks so much for sharing that. And with that being said, what got you initially interested in pursuing locum tenens work at the same time that you were focusing on the New Orleans community?

Dr. Sholas:

Sure, I never wanted to leave clinical practice altogether because clinical practice is the thing that got me started, it's the thing that keeps me going, and it's the thing that gives me the why. Locum tenens allowed me to pursue the things I wanted to do outside of medicine, but still keep a hand, or a foot, or a finger in the field. That did a couple things for me. Number one, it helped keep me grounded and remind me of the why. It also was flexible and allowed me to explore all the aspects of me, some of which are contributing to patients, one family at a time, and some of which, like we talked about with Empower NOLA, are contributing entire communities at a time. And I think locums really gave me a way to do all, rather than just picking one or the other.

Dr. Caudle:

No, that sounds so interesting, and I can totally understand how you feel. I'm a family physician myself, and I think it's great, all the different work that you're doing in different spheres. Based on all of your experiences, what would you say are some of the biggest advantages of locum tenens work?

Dr. Sholas:

Sure. Some of the biggest advantage of locum tenens work is you get to see how your particular specialty is practiced in different regions of the country. Some people don't have the advantage of growing up in one place, going to college another place, going to medical school a third place, and training in residency and fellowship a fourth place. If you stayed in one region of the country, you're

almost sort of jaded or biased, where there's only one way to do things. I think locums does a great job as you move around, explaining and exploring how the same process or problem can look different and be effective differently in different regions.

Dr. Caudle:

That makes sense. And then, on the flipside, what are some of the disadvantages you've encountered?

Dr. Sholas:

Yeah, some of the disadvantages is that if you're a super subspecialist, there are not a lot of opportunities. If you do OB/GYN, emergency medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, there are probably a lot of opportunities, a lot of places every day of the week, every hour of the day, but if you do something like I do – pediatric physical medicine and rehabilitation, there's just not a lot of people that know they can find someone like me in the locum tenens sphere, and when they do, there's just not the same plethora of jobs and locations. So, one of the challenges with the locums field is making sure that what you choose to do for a career is actually represented by the locums community and there's a space for you.

Dr. Caudle:

That makes a lot of sense. Thank you for sharing that. For those of you who are just tuning in, you're listening to *Spotlight on Locum Tenens* on ReachMD. I'm your host, Dr. Jennifer Caudle, and today I'm speaking with Dr. Maurice Sholas about his experiences with locum tenens work. So, Dr. Sholas, if we take a look at this in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, how has it impacted your experience working as a locum tenens?

Dr. Sholas:

With the COVID-19 pandemic, it actually became hard because travel became a challenge. So, I'm based in New Orleans, Louisiana, but one of my job experiences was in Cleveland, Ohio. So, the regulations of the state of Louisiana, the regulations of the state of Ohio, the availability of flights to get from one place to another really changed in the COVID pandemic. So, the logistics of actually being in a specific place, and providing a specific service, came to be a bigger challenge than I expected during the COVID-19 pandemic peak.

Dr. Caudle:

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense, and based on that, do you have any strategies you can share to help other physicians who may be working locum tenens assignments during the pandemic?

Dr. Sholas:

My suggestion to people that are working during the COVID-19 pandemic, or any future pandemics that come up, is number one, make sure that the place you're assigned to work, you can get to and from, multiple ways. So, if your assignment is near metro Atlanta, or metro Washington, D.C., or the metro New York City area, you have airports in those places that fly nonstop all over the universe so you can get there. If that's not an option for you, try and find places that are in your community that you can drive to and not necessarily be constrained by air travel. And the third thing is to really use the network and resources of your locum tenens company to help cut through some of the red tape of what's allowed, what's not allowed, how are you going to get there, when you get there where are you going to stay. Because one of the things that came up that was very interesting is the hotel I stayed in when I was doing my service in Ohio because of the pandemic, stopped having room service, and so there was no food at night to eat. So, if you arrived late at night, you just sort of had to tough it out or bring a snack until the morning. That sounds like a small thing, but when you're really trying to give your all to an assignment and the patients that are encompassed in that assignment, not being able to get the basics of food and comfort really makes a difference.

Dr. Caudle:

That makes a lot of sense. And before we close, Dr. Sholas, do you have any final thoughts or takeaways you'd like to share with our audience?

Dr. Sholas:

Sure. I want to encourage everybody listening to be the best version of yourself. And sometimes that is within medicine, sometimes that's outside of medicine, and sometimes it's a hybrid of both. And I find that the biggest, biggest limitation on what we can be and what we can do is our imagination of what's possible.

Locum tenens gives people the flexibility to really stay in medicine, but have other choices, and lets them dream, believe, and put together a life that maybe somebody else has never lived, but it's perfect for them.

Dr. Caudle:

Well, with those key takeaways in mind, I'd like to thank Dr. Maurice Sholas for joining us to share his experiences with locum tenens work. Dr. Sholas, it was great speaking with you today.

Dr. Sholas:

It was really nice speaking with you as well, and I wish the best to all of our audience and everyone involved with this program. This is a great way for people to get to know another pathway to being a good physician.

Announcer:

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