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## Travel Nurses Stand at the Ready

Article by: NANCY CROTTI Updated: March 17, 2011 - 3:05 PM

They may move locally or around the country, usually working 13-week stints in hospitals, nursing homes or clinics. And the market for their services is picking up after the recession, according to one local agency.

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Travel nurses must be able to hit the ground running, in more ways than one.

Not only do they need to be ready on short notice to relocate temporarily to work in a hospital, clinic or nursing home, they also must be able to step into the work quickly, with little orientation, according to Darla Rushmeyer, director of nursing for Medical Staffing Partners, Inc., Scandia ([www.medicalstaffingpartners.com](http://www.medicalstaffingpartners.com)).

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Medical Staffing Partners employs traveling nurses and surgical technologists, and is licensed to send them to work at hospitals in Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and Iowa. "We staff the 25-bed hospitals all the way up to the 500-bed hospitals," Rushmeyer said. "The clients range from right here in the Twin Cities to Handy, Minnesota, or Crosby, Minnesota. There is no standard client."

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These hospitals are looking for temporary staff with at least one year of recent hospital experience for general floor work, and three to four years' experience in a specialty. "The premise is that if a hospital places an order with this need, we are going to supply a very disciplined, experienced nurse who will present themselves to this facility, and with a day or two of orientation, they are on their own," Rushmeyer said.

### **Who they are**

Most contracts are for 13 weeks, and travel nurses run the gamut from people in their 20s to young parents who schedule periods of off-time with their children between travel jobs to those approaching retirement age, Rushmeyer said.

"Travel nursing provides a lot of freedom that someone working a regular job doesn't have," she added. "There is no typical traveler."

[Minneapolis](#) native Dave King, RN, worked as a travel nurse for a few years before settling in the San Francisco area. He worked at a couple of Twin Cities-area hospitals before taking on his first stint in Florida.

### **Nurses follow snowbirds**

Agencies and hospitals in southern states such as Florida and Arizona traditionally hire more in the winter months as the snowbirds descend, King said. Agencies generally find housing for nurses and pay their health insurance.

The tighter economy is dictating where nurses can travel now, and they may not get their first choice, according to King, although Rushmeyer said the work is picking up. Pay varies by state and city, but King says travel nursing is a good way to figure out what type of nursing to specialize in and where to live.

King advised anyone interested in travel nursing to do a lot of research, including a visit to [www.pantraveler.org](http://www.pantraveler.org), the website of the Professional Association of Nurse Travelers. "Be flexible," he advised. "Be prepared."

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