

Recruiting and Retaining Excellent Staff

By the WDS Practice Advisory Committee



From Dr. Sarah Harvey:

The key for me for retaining excellent staff is to ensure that they know they are a valued part of the team. Frequent, specific, positive feedback and expressions of gratitude help my nurses feel appreciated and helps reinforce the qualities I am looking for in my staff. I think it is also very important to listen to any concerns that are voiced or ideas for changes in our process. It can be very disheartening to feel like you are not being listened to and this is a common reason for turnover. The occasional free office lunch or coffee break can go a long way, too!

From Dr. Shawna Flanagan:

Be an office that accepts externs in a Medical Assisting training program. We have a local Medical Assisting vocational program that we participate with and I have hired two of my best medical assistants from this externship. The externship is a great way to get to know someone and experience the “honeymoon period” with no obligation to hire the trainee. Many of these medical assistants have passed through my office through the years---most we have known right away would not fit in with our office environment, but I have found two diamonds that continue to shine in my office through this program. One has been working with me for 15 years and the other has been with me for 10 years.

From Dr. Una Miniter:

Recruiting:

- Clearly define job expectations and how to be successful. Focus on personable and trainable characteristics. Shadow during the interview day for a few patients.
- Make sure your website shows your MAs with some “why I love working here” testimonials.
- Create relationships with local MA program directors/coordinators to create a pipeline. Sponsor a free lunch.
- Offer recruitment bonuses for current MAs.
- Have a defined length trial period to ensure a good fit.

Retaining:

- Create a defined curriculum of training. Pair a new recruit with a more experienced MA “mentor.”
- Gamify the experience with monthly or weekly prizes (cash bonus, gift cards, spa day, etc.) if the team member meets certain goals (callbacks, note taking accuracy, etc.) as well as a larger whole team goal every quarter or year. Provide recognition as well as constructive feedback consistently.
- Flexibility in schedule: consider job sharing.
- Provide clear criteria to meet each year in order to receive pay increases.
- Free lunch every day.
- Pay in 80th percentile.
- Discounts on procedures.
- Create a peaceful office culture, strong leadership skills (fair and consistent), and a consistent, positive attitude.
- Monthly or weekly meetings to review office issues and illicit feedback. They may feel most comfortable leaving comments anonymously.

From Dr. Mona Sadeghpour:

Institute 360 feedback: Ensure that your staff not only receives regular feedback but also has the opportunity to give feedback. Set up performance goals and reward great performance with bonuses rather than standard end of year bonuses which feel impersonal and are expected.

Stimulate engagement: Eat lunch with your staff at least once a month (hopefully more!). Use that as an opportunity to do an informal pulse check and connect with your team on a personal level. Eating together contributes to an intimate and caring culture and builds retention.

The **[Women’s Dermatologic Society \(WDS\) Practice Advisory Committee](#)** supports Dermatologists at any stage of their career looking to manage or start their own practice by offering resources on navigating the practice environment. Visit the **[WDS blog](#)** for more tips and advice.