

My experience with LifeBridge

Next week, I am transitioning to part time practice, and LifeBridge has had an important role in making the transition less terrifying.

I have been practicing Internal Medicine since 1995 in the same community since finishing residency. Our medical community has offered many opportunities and I have enjoyed the challenges of inpatient and outpatient medicine, with a focus on Cardiology and Nephrology over the years. Five years ago, I transitioned to outpatient practice, mostly geriatric care. We all know that healthcare has changed dramatically with remarkable advances in diagnostics and therapeutics. Limited choices in the past have given way to options we never imagined, and the constant learning makes medicine perpetually stimulating.

All has not been roses though. The last 25 years has also brought the EHR, regulation, prior authorization, and “Dr. Google” into our lives. Our experience with our current EHR has been mixed at best. After going live in 2017, the bulk of our IT resources went to fixing a broken revenue cycle. Usability for providers was an afterthought. I can attest to the figure that for every hour face to face with a patient, 2 hours is spent with documentation. This, combined with the toxic leadership style of our previous CEO, led to widespread dissatisfaction and frustration in the workplace. Then came COVID, further stressing an already broken system. We are now in the arduous task of rebuilding. We have great staff and we will get there - it will just take time.

In this setting, my wife and I have been formulating our exit strategy for the last 7-8 years. Our children have all grown and left the community, and we are without family nearby. We have felt the need for time – time to see family, time to travel, time for new experiences, time for projects. The thought of leaving the practice of medicine has been difficult though. I still enjoy caring for people, and there is a significant need for my skillset. I needed some help in navigating this change.

The NMA and LifeBridge were at our facility in June this year. I really hadn't been involved with NMA much, as our location is quite far west. So I took a break from the voice recognition and listened to their presentation. After hearing about LifeBridge, I took a deep breath and dialed their number a couple of days later, and got connected with Dr. Joann Schaefer. Experienced in the issues I was facing, she was very patient and helpful. She made me aware of factors I would not have considered, and offered thoughtful, practical and comfortable guidance to step back from full time. Which starts next week.

I have nothing but positive to say about my engagement with Dr. Schaefer and LifeBridge. I know that there are many who are stressed, burned out, or in transition. LifeBridge has the resources to help, and I have no reservations in recommending their services.

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