

Traveling Autonomy is Fabulous

Question:

How long can an assignment be?

Response:

There used to be a standard answer to this question. As the profession grows and demands change, we are seeing more and more variations in the length of contracts. Some nurses like the stability of a long assignment, while others like the fast pace of shorter assignments.

Travel nursing started as a profession to meet hospital seasonal shortages. Now, with the ongoing need for traveler's year around, we are seeing changes. The standard contract (around 95 to 98% of contracts) is still 3 months in length. However, more and more companies are offering contracts as short as 6 to 8 months in length. From what I understand, American Mobile and a few other companies are starting to offer these alternative contracts.

With the continual nursing shortage, nurses are finding it easier and easier to extend. Also, more companies are providing completion bonuses and sometimes extension upgrades. You can find a hospital with an ongoing need and keep extending at the end of your contract. I have met travelers that have worked at one hospital for a couple of years. In general, hospitals will usually start applying the pressure for you to come on as a full time employee once you have been a traveler with them for a year. Furthermore, it makes sense for you to change locations once a year in order for you keep benefiting tax wise. Once you stay somewhere a year or more, Uncle Sam doesn't want to see you as a temporary worker working away from home anymore. Don't worry; you can always go back to the hospital as a traveler, if you really liked it.

If you plan it right, you can have as much stability or instability as you want. The options are limitless. You have so many choices. The feeling of independence and control over your life when you travel is fabulous. Enjoy!