

MARKET SNAPSHOT: GASTROENTEROLOGY



There simply aren't enough gastroenterologists in the US to meet the current demand for GI services; unfortunately, the shortage continues to grow. Fewer physicians are entering the specialty, and many gastroenterologists are choosing to retire early. To gain an edge amidst these challenging conditions, healthcare organizations and staffing professionals can research underlying factors that influence the GI workforce and use those insights to build a more strategic employment approach.

What is Causing the GI Shortage?

- **High incidence of GI conditions.** An estimated 60-70 million people in the US suffer from digestive diseases.¹ Further, the growing population of individuals over age 65 needs GI care for age-related conditions like dysphagia and gastrointestinal cancers.²
- **Increase in young adult colorectal cancer.** The incidence of colorectal cancer in adults under age 55 has nearly doubled over the past decade, prompting the American Cancer Society to lower the screening age from 50 to 45.³
- **Consolidation of GI practices.** The structure of GI practices is shifting. The number of practices with 3 to 9 physicians declined 41% over the past decade.⁴ As of 2023, nearly 10% of US gastroenterologists were part of a private equity-backed platform.⁴
- **Advancements in GI treatment.** Promising innovations like minimally invasive and robotic procedures, wearable and ingestible devices, telehealth, and virtual reality allow for safer outpatient care with better outcomes.⁵

Supply of Gastroenterologists

Currently, in the US, there are 18,000+ clinicians who specialize in gastroenterology:

15,678

GASTROENTEROLOGISTS⁶

1,454

GI NURSE PRACTITIONERS⁷

1,469

GI PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS⁷

However, that's not enough to meet patient demands, and the US Bureau of Health Workforce has predicted a shortage of **1,630 gastroenterologists by 2025**.⁸

Further, **just over half**⁹ of practicing GI physicians are **55 or older**, with retirement on the horizon, and only **656 new physicians** entered GI residency in 2023.¹⁰

The shortage is driving an increased demand not only for GI physicians but also for advanced practitioners specializing in gastroenterology.¹¹

Demand for Gastroenterologists

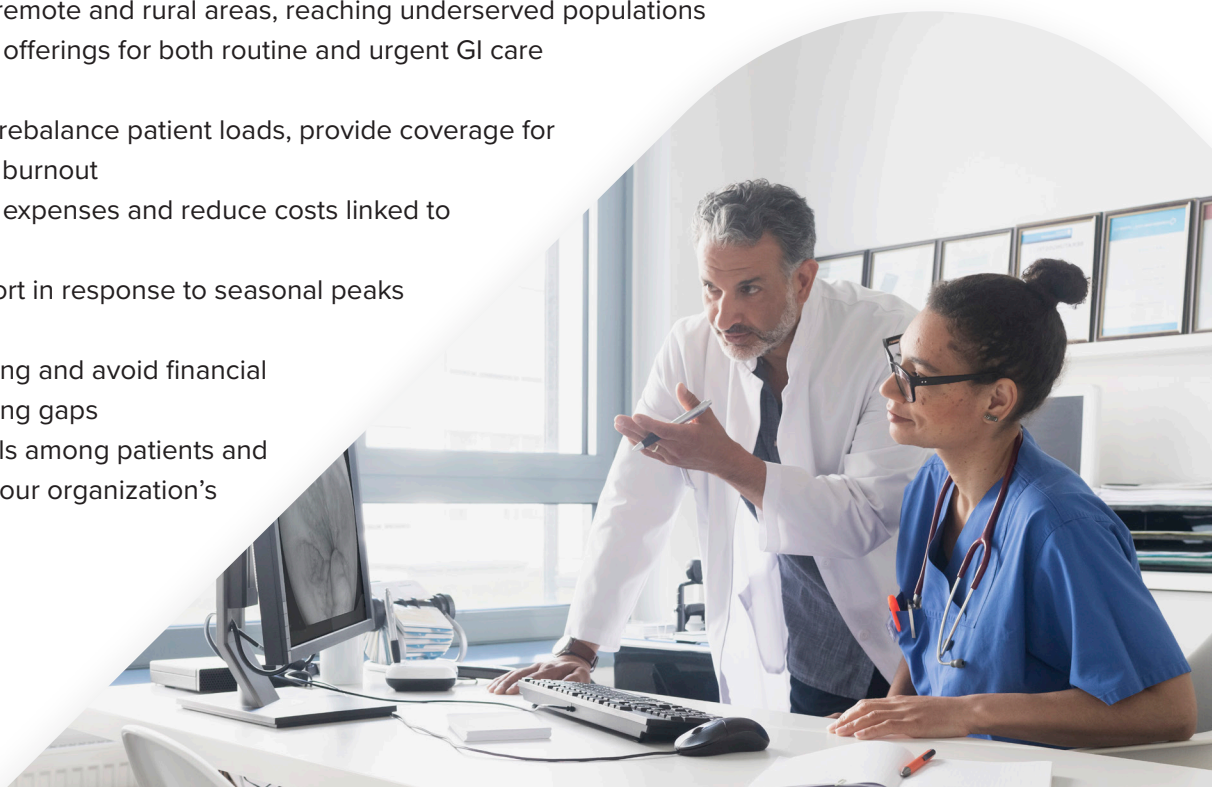
Gastroenterology has been reported as the most in-demand physician specialty.¹² There were **10,523 unique postings** for gastroenterology physicians over the last year.⁷

1. National Institutes of Health, 2. Gallo et al., 3. ACS, 4. Busam et al, 5. ModMed, 6. AAMC, 7. Lightcast, accessed Mar. 14, 2024, 8. HRSA, 9. AAMC, 10. National Resident Matching Program, 11. American College of Gastroenterology, Healio, 12. Becker's

Locum Tenens Providers: Filling the Workforce Gap for Healthcare Leaders

Understanding the drivers behind workforce fluctuations is only part of the puzzle. Health leaders must generate innovative strategies to ensure continuous access to patient care while managing budget constraints. Partnering with a reliable staffing firm that provides locum tenens, locum-to-perm, and permanent placement services can help you secure cost-effective, high-quality medical personnel for your organization. Bringing in locum tenens support means you can:

- Maintain consistent access to essential GI services for patients
- Expand GI services in remote and rural areas, reaching underserved populations
- Enhance telemedicine offerings for both routine and urgent GI care consultations
- Improve team morale, rebalance patient loads, provide coverage for absences, and reduce burnout
- Cut down on overtime expenses and reduce costs linked to overburdened GI staff
- Quickly ramp up support in response to seasonal peaks in demand
- Ensure continuous billing and avoid financial losses caused by staffing gaps
- Boost satisfaction levels among patients and providers, protecting your organization's reputation and image



To explore how locum tenens gastroenterologists and GI advanced practice providers can help your facility, visit <https://www.crosscountry.com/locums/client-solutions>.



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