



## Case Study

# Cooperation, Efficiency Help Wyoming Healthcare Staffing Amid COVID-19 Crunch

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, with clinicians in short supply and rate increases imminent, how can small or rural healthcare providers compete? Learn how the Wyoming Hospital Association partnered with **Medical Solutions** to help its members beat the labor market and maximize CARES Act funding.



### CHALLENGE

Like hospitals everywhere, Wyoming facilities were facing severe staffing shortages due to a surge in COVID-19 patients. Further, increased demand and shortened supply created the potential for staggering rate increases that could leave rural hospitals priced out of the market for qualified medical professionals.



### SOLUTION

The Wyoming Governor authorized \$20 million in CARES Act funds to bring additional medical personnel to the state to alleviate the strain on Wyoming hospitals. The Wyoming Hospital Association engaged Medical Solutions to lead the staffing for its members, to ensure quality hires and make the absolute most of the funds.



### RESULTS

The \$20 million in CARES funding was put to the best use. Medical Solutions helped staff 285 clinicians at 40 facilities, with an 84% fill rate. A plan for rate ranges allowed Wyoming to stay ahead of the rate curve. Facilities got adequate staffing, and local nurses and managers stayed focused on patient care. No hospitals had to turn away patients in the crisis.

# Recruitment Strategy

## The COVID Crunch

The number of COVID-19 patients in Wyoming was surging, as hospitalizations more than tripled in less than a month. The increased cases created a demand for nurses and clinicians. Area hospitals needed to fill more than 250 clinical positions. With higher demand comes higher rates. In this environment, smaller and rural hospitals could be priced out of the market for healthcare providers, at the time when they were needed most.

Of course, the pandemic was not just in Wyoming, but nationwide and worldwide. Travelers had an abundance of options for where to work during the pandemic. How could Wyoming compete with more urban areas that were also hard hit by COVID-19?

Hiring many people in a short time also presented a serious strain for managers. Time spent screening and interviewing traveling nurses is time spent away from patient care. How could healthcare leaders stay focused on patient care while quickly and effectively increasing nursing staff statewide?

On behalf of its member facilities, the Wyoming Hospital Association contracted with **Medical Solutions** to utilize \$20 million in CARES Act funds to hire clinicians. The two organizations had a partnership dating back to November 2016 so Medical Solutions had a significant footprint in the state, serving 12 of its hospitals already, which provided a solid understanding of their staffing needs.

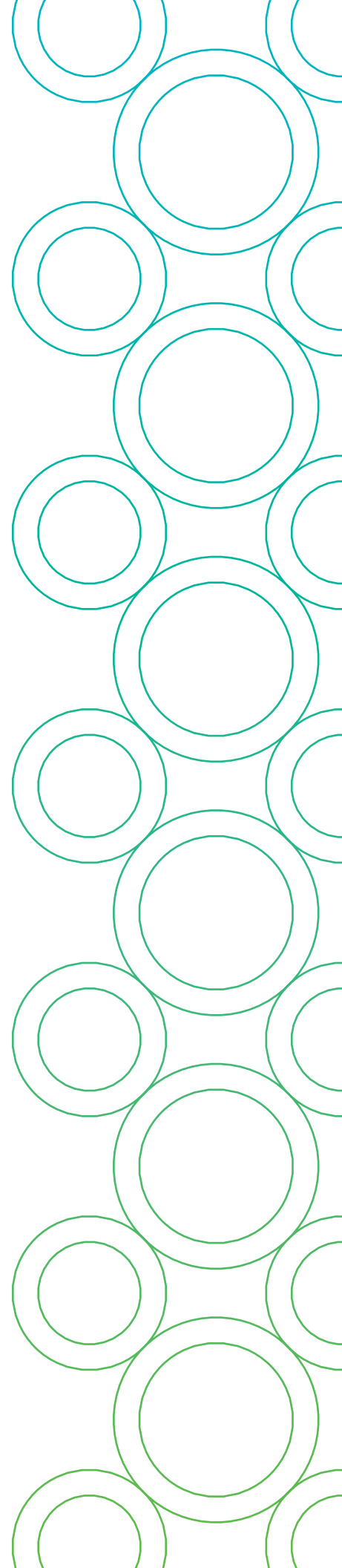
# Execution

## An Efficient and Cooperative Approach

To address this challenge for smaller or rural hospitals, **Medical Solutions** created a centralized hiring process for all the Association's members. The managed services provider was the single point of contact for hospitals to request staff, and then it served as a clearinghouse, utilizing several agencies to fill open positions.

Medical Solutions' clinical team handled candidate screening, which saved hours from the time of submission to offer. Medical Solutions also handled all the offers made to traveling staff. With Medical Solutions ensuring the quality of traveling staff and managing the screening, local managers and leaders could remain focused on providing patient care.

This approach also leveled the competitive playing field for staffing across the state. With the Association using CARES act funding, its member hospitals were not competing against each other for clinicians. So small and large hospitals were treated equally. This would also allow Wyoming to compete for talent better as a whole, as traveling clinicians were in demand nationwide.



# Results

## Ahead of the Market Rate, Before It's Too Late

**Medical Solutions** helped the Association's members fill the initial need for 108 clinicians in just a week and a half, before the Association added an additional 177 positions. In the end, 285 clinical roles at 40 facilities were staffed with a fill rate of more than 84%, well above industry averages. Wyoming's COVID-19 response is an example for other less-populated states to follow in a crisis.

Because the Association acted early and proactively, Medical Solutions had a plan in place for Wyoming to stay ahead of the market rate before it was too late. They did not have to go to the top of the rate range and enabled the Association to use the CARES Act funds more efficiently.

Seldom is spending all of the funds a measure of success, but in this case the Association's priority was utilizing every bit of this "use it or lose it" federal funding to fill the most positions possible in a state that needed help during a health crisis. Ultimately, patient care is the true measure of success, as none of the hospitals reported having to turn away patients due to lack of staff.



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# About Us

**Medical Solutions** is an industry-leading workforce solutions partner which streamlines clinical and non-clinical healthcare staffing through fully customized programs. Nationwide, Medical Solutions has helped healthcare facilities gain whole-house efficiency, control labor costs, and enhance patient care standards by finding the right people at the right time.

**Interested in learning more?**

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