
THE ROAD TO RICHES?

Decision to travel not an easy one to make | BY BEATRICE NAGY, RT(R)(T)

I am fairly new as a traveling radiation therapist, but my journey so far has been very rewarding. I began to travel and work throughout the United States for a temporary agency in January 2001. I have been working as a radiation therapist since 1987. Before that, I worked as a radiologic technologist.

My decision to uproot my life and my career and to live out of a suitcase took a great deal of thought. It was a difficult decision that took careful consideration. I weighed all aspects of my job situation at the time against the benefits of being a traveling therapist. I have never regretted my choice, except for the fact that I am not with my family as often as I would like to be.

I am a divorced mother with two sons. One is in college and the other attends school in the Florida panhandle, my permanent residence. When I discussed with my family my plans to travel, there was a unanimous vote of acceptance among everyone who would be affected by my decision. We all agreed it was a great opportunity.

Both of my sons have visited me during my assignments and we have spent great times together sightseeing. Think about it—how else could you work and vacation at the same time?

Behind the Decision

Before I became a traveler, my job was beginning to take its toll on me. I know that my co-workers and many other medical pro-

fessionals feel the same way. Thanks to bureaucracy, medicine seems to have become a business, with hospitals and clinics downsizing departments to cut expenses. Eventually, this causes severe understaffing. Understaffed departments and facilities lead to burnout. Staffs in these situations are fatigued and stressed. Overworked therapists become more and more unhappy with their jobs.

Since administrations began downsizing departments, some have compensated for the short staffing by bringing radiologic technologists to work as assistants to registered radiation therapists. In response to such tactics, I can only comment that I value my expertise in my chosen profession. I took the initiative to further my education by returning to school to become a licensed, registered radiation therapist, and I have never regretted that decision. I know that I have the appropriate knowledge to deliver ionizing radiation to patients without jeopardizing them.

Many benefits

Thinking of traveling? Remember to compare all aspects of your permanent position to those of a traveling position.

Not only do I get a great hourly salary, my company benefits are outstanding: license reimbursement, malpractice insurance, paid hotel or my choice of apartments, paid rental car and paid airfare.

Besides all the benefits that come with my traveling position, I don't have to take call,

and I appreciate being able to just relax on the weekends. I am able to spend my free time exploring the surrounding area. For instance, when I was working in Dallas, all of the temporary therapists would go sightseeing as a group. We even took advantage of the low round-trip airline fares to Mexico. We would get together and take road trips to surrounding cities, such as Fort Worth and San Antonio.

When I was working in Grand Rapids, Michigan, we took road trips to Canada and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The landscape there is absolutely beautiful! It is so lush and green. We saw rolling hills, bountiful evergreen trees and lots of water. The area around the Great Lakes is so beautiful, some with cliffs overlooking sandy beaches.

At this writing, I am back in Florida, my home state. Even here, I still can enjoy the scenery. The facility where I work has great people. Some of us recently went to Universal Studios Islands of Adventure to go roller coaster riding. We had a blast together.

If you become a traveler, remember that you have been placed at each facility to help the therapists or technologists. Expect to work hard to gain their respect, since you are indeed making more money than they are. Work for it! In the long run, you'll be very satisfied with yourself.

Good luck to all of you who decide to go on the road.

Med *Travelers*

(800) 788-4815

www.med-travelers.com