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From The Editors

YOUR CONTRACT AS A TRAVEL NURSE

You've talked to the hospital, and now you are ready to head off to your new destination. Our recruiter talks to the hospital and the deal is done on their end, but what about the deal on your end?

This is where things get fun. Everything is agreed upon verbally and then the contract is drawn up and sent to you. Your first assignment before you get to your destination is to read the fine print of the document that will dictate what your career will be for the next 13-weeks.

Negotiations with the recruiter can sometimes be a tedious job, but every detail must be dealt with. Your first indication might be to think, "we discussed everything, and it's in there." NO! I guarantee you that the first time do that will be the last time that you do that.

Set down in a quiet place and read your contract word for word and between the lines. If there is any part that you do not agree with, or have questions about do NOT sign until those questions have

been answered.

If you have a vacation planned, or if you need certain days off, make sure that you get those dates into writing. It has been my experience that if it is not in writing then you may have to just live with the consequences. If it IS in writing, then you are guaranteed those days off.

What exactly is in this wonderful document? When you open up your new hire packet, you will find several pages of legal jargon that states that you are going to a hospital or facility to work for a certain amount of time for a certain dollar amount. That you are going to act like a professional, and that the client hospital and your travel company are going to treat you like a professional.

The employment relationship is the beginning of the contract that states the condition of your employment. This section will define the simple terms of roles between the nurse, the facility, and the travel company. This will include whether your employment is based on a temporary, travel, or permanent position.

The next section will define the employee relationship, and define the responsibilities of you to the travel company and client. In this part of the contract, you will also find a list of the travel company's responsibilities to you.

Never work for a travel company that does not reiterate that they are there to support you, the nurse. Remember, you the nurse are the one they need. You are the one in demand. You are the one in control.

The "professional responsibilities section" defines your responsibilities as a professional at the hospital in which you are assigned to. The employment relationship section also is written to ensure that you are held responsible for your actions upon the occurrence of an irresponsible event.

Among the professional responsibilities, it states that you will act in accordance with the laws and standards of practice that are set forth by such governing entities such as joint commission, occupational safety hazards, and the

Medicaid and Medicare systems.

As a protection to the travel company, a clause is added that states that if you act in a careless manner that effects patients or the client hospital that you can and will be turned into the local authorities and state nursing board.

Among your professional responsibilities is the responsibility to carry your professional license(s) with you and any other documentation that might be needed related to your nursing qualifications including ACLS, PALS, TNCC, and State Licenses.

The job assignment term is usually listed next. Among the terms are you start date, end date, exact location and exact

hospital, and the floor that you will be assigned to. Also list in this area is your responsibility for on call and floating assignments.

If you do not want to float or do not want to be put on call, then make sure that it is put into writing. If you do not feel comfortable floating to a certain floor, like O.B. or O.R., then state it in your contract. When reviewing this section of your contract, you also must be mindful that part of a travel nurses job is to be flexible. This is YOUR contract, and you must protect yourself!

When it comes to your work salary and housing, get everything in writing and don't ever take anything for granted. If there are days off that you want guaranteed, then ask for them in your contract. If floating is a possibility, then specify the

situations that you will not float; as in the fact that I don't feel comfortable in ICU or OB, so I put in my contracts that I will not float to ICU or OB. If you want ever weekend on or every weekend off or your willing to work every other weekend, specify that in your contract if that matters to you. Put it in writing whether you wish to work overtime or not.

In this business, verbal agreements mean nothing. You ever watch them court shows in the afternoon? ALWAYS the judge wants to know if you had it in writing. If it isn't in writing, you just lost. A nice recruiter may be a pleasure to work with, but just remember that they are working for the money that they get from handling your contract. Remember, they are no more than nursing salespeople.

A nursing assistant, floor nurse, and charge nurse from a small nursing home were taking a lunch break in the break room. In walks a lady dressed in silk scarves and wearing large polished stoned jewelry.

"I am 'Gina the Great'," stated the lady. "I am so pleased with the way you have taken care of my aunt that I will now grant the next three wishes!" With a wave of her hand and a puff of smoke, the room was filled with flowers, fruit and bottles of drink, proving that she did have the power to grant wishes before any of the nurses could think otherwise.

The nurses quickly argued among themselves as to which one would ask for the first wish. Speaking up, the nursing assistant wished first.

"I wish I were on a tropical island beach, with single, well-built men feeding me fruit and tending to my every need." With a puff of smoke, the nursing assistant was gone.

The floor nurse went next. "I wish I were rich and retired and spending my days in my own warm cabin at a ski resort with well groomed men feeding me cocoa and doughnuts." With a puff of smoke, she too was gone.

"Now, what is the last wish?" asked the lady.

The charge nurse said, "I want those two back on the floor at the end of the lunch break."

Destination Spotlight

CORPUS CHRISTIE, TEXAS

Whether it's deep-sea fishing, love of history and Columbus, or the white-sand beach, you'll have a great time in Corpus Christi, Texas. The museum boasts with spectacular exhibits of Texas history going back to 1492 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue. Things to do in Corpus Christi include swimming, sunbathing, windsurfing, parasailing, scuba diving, deep-sea fishing, dining at the waterfront seafood restaurants, and visiting the museums and historical landmarks.

Our tour of Corpus Christi starts at the Centennial House. Forbes Britton, a Virginian and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, came to Corpus Christi as an Army Captain in the Mexican War in 1846. He returned as a civilian, and with his wife, Rebecca Millard had this classic revival house built by the contractors Gravis, Berry, & Yates in 1849. Britton ranched, and was a partner the shipping firm of Britton, Mann, & Yates, and helped for the first company to obtain a deep water channel for the city. He served from 1857 to 1861 in the Texas Senate. As Adjutant General, he was personal emissary of Governor Sam Houston to the U.S. President Buchanan in 1860.

His grave is in the state cemetery in Austin.

Left with servants during the Civil War (a confederate hospital in 1862, the house became the hospital and officers' mess for the federal army in 1866. It was the citizen's refuge in raids of desperadoes and Indians while home of James and Janet Bryden from 1870 to 1878. The family of George and Cornelia Moore Evans owned the property from 1880 to 1936. Southern Minerals Corporation's president, Maston Nixon, owned, restored and preserved the place from 1936 to 1965.

Recognized as the oldest existent structure in Corpus Christi, it was designated the Centennial House in 1949. Since 1965 it has been owned and preserved by the Corpus Christi Area Heritage Society. It was recorded as a Texas Historical Landmark and in the National Register of Historical places in 1966.

Our next stop is the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History. This spectacular museum is most famous for the 1556 Spanish Shipwreck. The Museum has exact replicas of the three ships that Columbus used in his first exploration of the world, the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. These ships are unexpectedly small, and definitely make one marvel at the wonder of Columbus' voyage so long ago. These

ships were constructed in 1992 to commemorate the anniversary of the voyage.

This Museum is also the aquatic archeological storehouse on behalf of Texas. Importance is on target-based, reality based, creative and entertaining activities, programs, and exhibits with South Texas as the center of attention. It houses several collections including the McGregor Collection, which is a large photographic collection that ranges from the 1920's to the 1960's. The Marine Archeological Repository is a conventional laboratory, which safeguards an assortment of museum quality pieces, and carried out investigative missions on the sixteenth to eighteenth century wreckages locations throughout the Caribbean. This includes LaSalle's ship, the *La Belle*, which sank in the Matagorda Bay.

The Corpus Christi Greyhound Track is the place for year round greyhound racing with a full card of simulcasts of both greyhounds and horses. Races are programmed for afternoon and evening races. It boasts a luxurious clubhouse along site of a great grandstand with a variety of seating. The food court is second to none! Daily simulcasts start at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday through Saturday the live races start at

7:30 p.m. with races starting at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The usual concessions of hot dogs, hamburgers, beer, and soda are available at all times, with dining room buffet on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Luciano's Italian family restaurant has been located in downtown Corpus Christi for over 40 years. They pride themselves in serving only the best fresh garden vegetables, flavored with fresh herbs and aged Parmigiano Reggiano cheese.

Only the top trade beef, seafood, and poultry is used. They invite you to join them for a meal from an elegant Salad to the most mouth-watering

delicious pasta platters available. You will also find the finest of wine for every taste and every budget to compliment your meal.

At Santiago's Famous Mexican Food you will start out with a free appetizer of their scrumptious chili con queso for those first time visitors. They thoroughly believe that after one taste of their chili you will keep on returning for more great food. The owner, Santiago Martinez believes that entrees should be not only delectable, but healthy for you. He does his part to help the new healthy eating craze by minimizing fat. No fat is added to their food, and canola oil is the only thing they use to prepare their fried selections. To

enhance the environment, the sounds of Mariachi music are streaming throughout the building. It's no wonder that this fine establishment has won awards for best new restaurant, best Mexican food, best fajitas, best lunch, and best find dining.

For dining in a different setting, we suggest Joe's Crab Shack. Although it looks like a Oceanside shanty, it is staffed with a great crew that is family friendly, catering to the children. It's favorites include crab balls, crab cakes, gumbo, steaks and grilled chicken.

This is just a tip of the ocean when it comes to Corpus Christi. No matter what you like, you will have a GREAT time in Corpus Christi, Texas!

Favorite Nursing Quotes

"Mistakes are proof that you are trying."

"If you are feeling good, don't worry. You will get over it."

"The buck doesn't even slow down here."

"Never put off till tomorrow what you can avoid all together."

"The more I learn, the less I understand."

"Doctors say I have a multiple personality, but we don't agree with that."

"Don't ask me, I'm making this up as I go!"

"Due to budget cuts, light at the end of tunnel will be out."

"Your butt is better than mine."

Company Spotlight

PREMIER HEALTHCARE STAFFING

[HTTP://WWW.TRAVELPHP.COM/](http://www.travelphp.com/)

Do you serve only the United States, or can I travel to other countries?

PHP Inc. is part of a large group of companies specializing in the placement of nurses and other healthcare professionals around the world. The group has company owned offices in London, Sydney and Johannesburg and it is from these offices that it places nurses throughout the UK, Australia and South Africa.

Your website states that you provide 'professional liability insurance'. Does that mean that you will reimburse me for my personal malpractice insurance, or is this just insurance that protects you, the company?

We arrange professional liability insurance for each of our nurses at no cost to the individual. The insurance is for the sole benefit of our nurses and we have cover for each nurse at any of our client facilities. The cover is automatically included within the comprehensive benefits package that we provide to our nurses.



Your website also states 'loyal healthcare professionals who have been working with us for many years!'...What qualities does your company have that keep the nurses working for you?

The PHP group has been placing nurses in the US for nearly two decades. We understand the professional and personal requirements of each of our nurses and, furthermore, we fully respect each and every one of those requirements. Most members of our recruitment and placement staff have worked with the PHP Group for more than 8 years and are fully aware of the importance of our nurses' personal satisfaction. We are very proud of the fact that over 85% of our new enquiries originate from referrals from past or present working nurses. The business simply would not have grown to the force it is today, through the many market changes, without its dedicated and experienced team of staff.

I work night shift. What if I have problems at night? Do you have someone that I can talk to even in the middle of the night?

All of our nurses are provided with a toll free number that can be used to contact a PHP representative 24 hours of the day. PHP prides itself on the level of service that it provides its nurses and is more than happy to deal with any issues that may arise, day or night.

What makes your company different from all the rest?

In addition to providing unparalleled service standards to our nurses, we also boast the most flexible benefits package available in the market today. We will allow all of our nurses to choose from a menu of benefits and pay rates to match their own personal requirements. We guarantee to at least match any legitimate pay and benefits package available in the marketplace today. Our nurses appreciate the personal service, pay, and benefits that we offer to them and this is evidenced by the fact that some of our nurses have been contracted with our group companies for almost a decade.

For More Information Contact:

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Hospital Happenings

**OREGON STATE
HEALTH UNIV.**

At Oregon Health and Science University their top priority is to enhance the safety, health, and way of life of the people in Oregon and the surrounding states through the utilization of Oregon's only academic health science center. They accomplish this through the use of research, education, outreach, and patient care.

Research is on the cutting edge of health and biomedical science, making major advances and new innovations every week. The facility has an impressive history of obtaining competitive grants from federal agencies. Recent breakthroughs include vitamins and natural herbals that help Alzheimer patients, discovery of dopamine receptors, discovery of nerve cell communicators, and identification of a new protein that plays a role in causing some cancer. The enthusiasm and wealth of knowledge is carried

into the clinic and classroom settings. This combination of research and clinical work not only benefits other healthcare workers, but also a great improvement is seen in patient care.

Setting the model for nobility, altruism and leadership, they are dedicated to educating the next generation of health professionals, scientists and environmental engineers for leadership in their fields. Their educational schools range from dentistry to medicine, to molecular and cellular biosciences to their school of nursing.

Their school of nursing includes programs ranging from a Bachelors of Science in Nursing to a PhD in Nursing. They even have a special Bachelor to Doctorate bridge. Associate Degree nurses have several options in getting their degree from on campus work to an online degree. The School of Nursing is committed to superiority in nursing education

through enduring education; considerate, superior care of individuals and societies; and the all-inclusive quest of intelligence and innovation.

At OHSU they care for varied clientele whose health care requirements vary from critical to severe and multifaceted health problems that necessitate the exceedingly refined management and care. Their therapies range from everyday to innovative, by means of the consequences of their investigative nursing practices to progression of the care that they provide to their patients.

At OHSU you will find a team effort that cultivates development and education with professionals that are enthusiastic about professional maturity and improvement. At OHSU you will also gain access to intellectual and entertaining resources that result in nurses gravitating to the Pacific Northwest.

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Epstein LaRue, Owner and Chief Executive of Highway Hypodermics
Melissa S. James, Special Consultant and Columnist

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