

Ultimate Guide to Becoming a Part-Time Emergency Medicine Physician



INSPIRE
Medical Staffing

www.InspireMedical.com

How Physicians Can Build a Flexible, Fulfilling Career with a Staffing Partner and Advocate

Index

- 1** Introduction– Rethinking What It Means to Be an EM Physician Today
- 2** Chapter 1: Why Part-Time EM is the Right Move for Many Physicians
- 3** Chapter 2: Building a Career That Works for You
- 4** Chapter 3: Partnering with the Right Staffing Agency
- 5** Chapter 4: Skill Retention & Clinical Relevance
- 6** Chapter 5: Designing Your Flexible EM Future
- 7** Conclusion: Your Career. Your Terms.



Introduction: Rethinking What It Means to Be an EM Physician Today

The landscape of emergency medicine is evolving. For many physicians, the traditional full-time path—long shifts, high stress, limited flexibility—is no longer sustainable or desirable.

Whether you're:

- Early in your career, you want to explore different hospitals or regions,
- A mid-career physician needing a better life-work balance,
- Or approaching retirement but not ready to fully step away—

Part-time emergency medicine offers a compelling path forward.

This guide helps you understand what a part-time EM career can look like—professionally, financially, and personally. It breaks down how to maintain your clinical edge, choose the right shifts, and align with a staffing partner who supports your goals, not just fills a schedule.

You'll discover how working part-time can:

- Provide flexibility without sacrificing income or relevance,
- Let you explore travel or locum tenens opportunities on your terms,
- And most importantly, allows you to practice medicine on your schedule.

Considering a part-time arrangement in emergency medicine could be stepping into a new version of your career—one built around your values, lifestyle, and aspirations.

Chapter 1: Why Part-Time EM is the Right Move for Many Physicians

Emergency medicine has never been just a job—it's a calling. But that calling doesn't have to come with burnout, chronic fatigue, or the loss of work-life balance.

Across the country, physicians are reassessing what they want from their careers. For many, the answer isn't to leave emergency medicine altogether—it's to reshape how they practice it.

The Traditional Path Is Evolving

For years, the standard EM career was defined by full-time clinical hours, long overnight shifts, and little flexibility. But the realities of medicine today—higher volumes, increasing administrative burden, and ongoing staffing shortages—have pushed many physicians to a breaking point

At the same time, life outside of work hasn't slowed down. Family responsibilities, personal passions, health concerns, and mental well-being are demanding more space in physicians' lives. The result? More EM physicians are seeking **career paths that allow them to stay in the field while regaining control over their time.**

And that's exactly what part-time work offers.



What "Part-Time" Really Means

Part-time doesn't mean less capable, less ambitious, or less committed. In fact, it often means more intentional.

For emergency medicine physicians, part-time can take several forms:

- Moonlighting shifts to supplement a residency salary or test-drive new hospitals
- Reduced hours in mid-career to prioritize family or health
- A travel-based schedule to explore different regions or care models
- A phased retirement plan to keep skills sharp without burning out

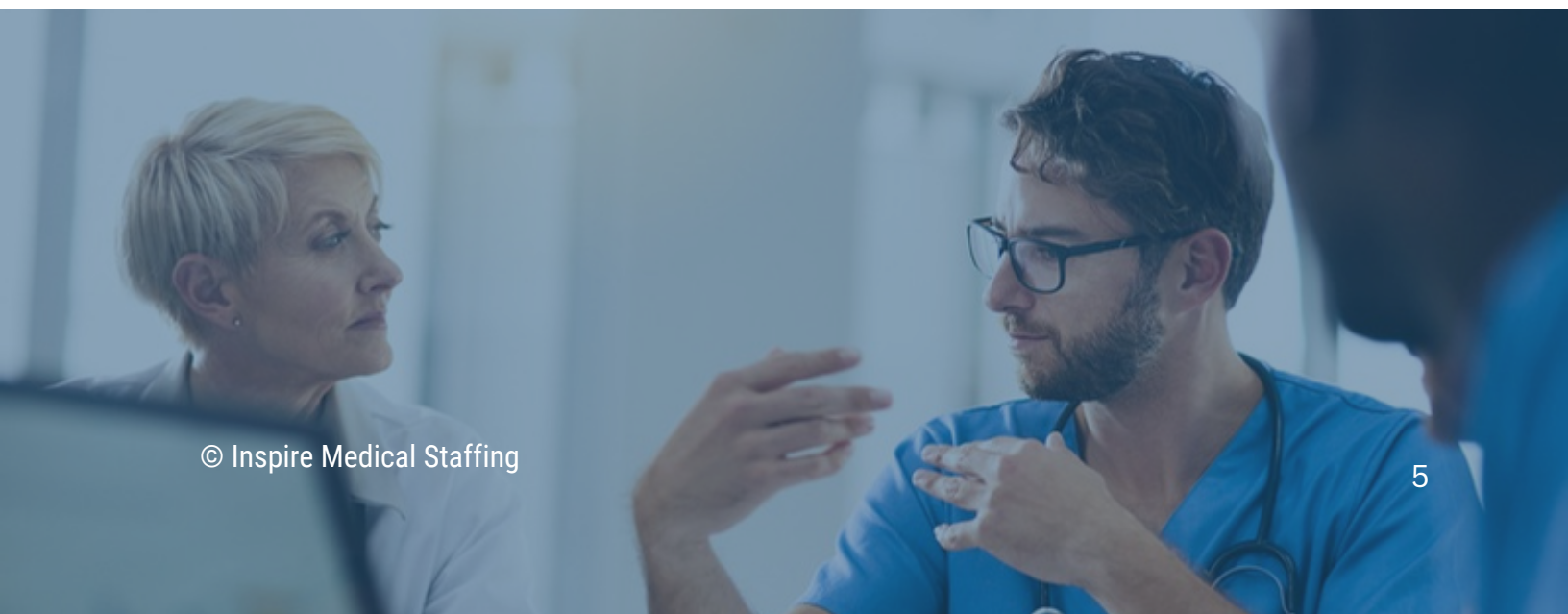
The common thread is flexibility—and the ability to design a career that aligns with your life, not the other way around.

Signs It Might Be Time to Go Part-Time

Many physicians reach a point where the full-time pace no longer fits. You might be ready for a shift if:

- You feel emotionally or physically drained after every stretch of shifts
- Your schedule is interfering with family, health, or creative goals
- You're curious about travel work but can't commit full-time
- You want to keep practicing, but reduce the cognitive and physical load
- You're nearing retirement and want a gradual transition rather than a hard stop

Rather than “quitting,” part-time is about staying—on your terms.



Physicians Are Already Making the Shift

You're not alone. More physicians than ever are choosing flexibility:

"After a decade in full-time urban ERs, I moved to six shifts a month in a rural hospital through a staffing partner. I see fewer patients, but my impact feels greater—and I have time to coach my daughter's soccer team."

— Dr. M, Board-Certified EM Physician

"I started moonlighting in residency to pay off loans faster. But I stuck with it afterward because I liked having variety—and it gave me breathing room to start a telemedicine side gig."

— Dr. L, Early-Career Physician

A Career Strategy, Not a Step Down

The misconception that part-time work means “slowing down” or “checking out” is outdated. In reality, physicians are using part-time structures to:

- Diversify income (with consulting, teaching, or telemedicine)
- Reduce stress and improve clinical longevity
- Stay clinically active while launching businesses or raising families
- Reconnect with the reasons they chose medicine in the first place

In short, it's about a sustainable, satisfying practice.

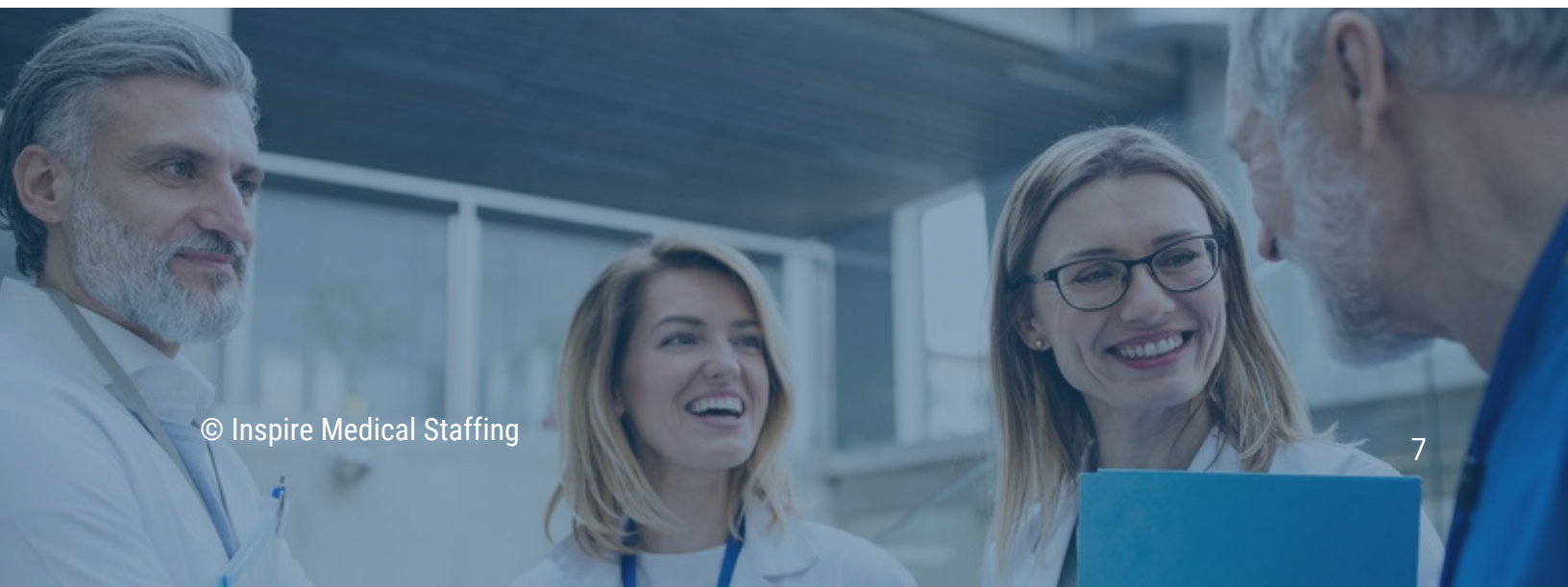
How Staffing Partners Enable This Transition

The key to a successful part-time EM career isn't just deciding to do less—it's partnering with a team that helps make it possible. That includes:

- Access to a range of shift types, schedules, and locations
- Support with licensing, credentialing, and logistics
- A system that prioritizes physician well-being, not just staffing quotas

A great staffing partner helps you align your skills and preferences with opportunities that fit—not force you into someone else's mold.

In the next chapter, we'll explore how to actually build a part-time EM career—what decisions to make, what options to consider, and how a supportive agency can help you design a schedule that works for your life.





Chapter 2: Building a Career That Works for You

What makes a “good” emergency medicine career? For many physicians today, the answer is changing.

No longer defined by 12-hour shifts and full-time status, success in EM is being redefined by **flexibility, control, and meaningful impact**—on your terms. Whether you’re looking to pick up extra shifts or design an entirely part-time lifestyle, this chapter explores how to build a schedule and structure that supports both your **career goals** and **life outside medicine**.

Define What You Want—And Why It Matters

The first step in crafting a part-time EM career is getting clear on your priorities. Ask yourself:

- How many shifts per month feel sustainable?
- Do you prefer higher acuity or lower-volume sites?
- Are you interested in rural travel, staying local, or both?
- Do you want consistency—or variety?
- How important is pay vs. schedule flexibility?

There’s no “right” answer—only the answer that’s right for you. And those answers may change over time.

Some physicians want predictability. Others want a dynamic, mix-and-match schedule that keeps things fresh. The key is designing your clinical time *around* your life—not squeezing your life into an inflexible calendar.



Travel & Locum Tenens: Work That Moves With You

Locum tenens opportunities have become a go-to option for part-time EM physicians for good reason:

- **Freedom to choose where and when you work**
- **Premium compensation for short-term or rural needs**
- **The agency handles travel and lodging logistics.**
- **Zero long-term commitment**

Many physicians use locums to supplement income, explore different types of hospitals, or work intensively for part of the month and take the rest off.

"I started locums because I wanted to see more of the country while still practicing. Now I take two weeks off every month—and still hit my financial goals."

— Dr. J, EM Physician, Locums-Only Schedule

Travel work isn't just about variety—it's about **freedom and impact**.



How the Right Staffing Partner Makes It All Work

Building a part-time EM career is much easier—and more sustainable—when you're not doing it alone.

A physician-first staffing agency helps you:

- Access the right shifts at the right cadence
- Understand contract options without hidden surprises.
- Get support with licensing, credentialing, and malpractice.
- Customize your schedule based on your needs, not just theirs.

You don't need to call five hospitals—or chase shift coordinators.

You need a partner that says, "Let's find what works for you."

With the right partner, you can spend less time chasing opportunities—and more time choosing the ones that truly fit your life.

One Final Word: You're In Control

This is your career. You can choose:

- When you work
- Where you work
- How much you work

The era of one-size-fits-all emergency medicine is over. Part-time practice isn't about stepping back—it's about stepping forward, on your terms.

In the next chapter, we'll look at how to find and work with a staffing partner that treats you like a professional—not a puzzle piece. We'll walk you through what to look for, what to avoid, and how to make your part-time plan a reality.

Chapter 3: Partnering with the Right Staffing Agency

If flexibility is the “what” of a part-time EM career, the right staffing partner is the “how.”

You can't build a low-stress, high-impact schedule if you're chasing shift coordinators, navigating license renewals on your own, or waiting weeks to hear back about credentialing. And you shouldn't have to.

A physician-focused staffing agency doesn't just fill open shifts—it helps you design the clinical life you want.

What a Great Staffing Partner Does (and Doesn't) Do

Not all staffing agencies are created equal. Some treat physicians like interchangeable contractors. Others invest in you as a professional—supporting your long-term goals, not just next week's coverage.

Here's what a great staffing agency **should provide**:

✓ Personalized Scheduling Support

You shouldn't have to scroll through job boards or guess which shifts are a fit. A staffing advocate listens to what you want and matches you with the right roles—whether it's three shifts a month locally or 10 shifts traveling statewide.

✓ Fast, Clear Communication

You deserve timely updates, shift confirmations, and transparent answers—not voicemails and delays.

✓ Credentialing & Licensing Help

Don't waste time in paperwork purgatory. A reliable agency handles credentialing support, hospital onboarding, and multi-state licensing guidance.



✓ Malpractice Coverage & Travel Logistics

A professional agency protects your risk and time. That includes malpractice insurance, housing/travel booking, and precise pay details upfront.

✓ Physician Advocacy

Perhaps most importantly, a quality agency doesn't just fill a role—they advocate for your needs with hospital partners. You're not just a name on a spreadsheet. You're a valued member of their clinical network.

"I've worked with multiple agencies over the years—but the ones I stay with are the ones that call me back, know what shifts I prefer, and actually check in after assignments. That matters."

— Dr. B, Board-Certified EM Physician

Red Flags to Watch For

While many staffing agencies operate with integrity, here are a few signs you might be dealing with a transactional outfit:

- You never speak to the same person twice
- They offer you shifts that don't match your stated preferences.
- Pay rates and details are vague or shift at the last minute.
- There's little support with onboarding, travel, or licensing.
- You feel like a cog in the machine—not a partner in care.

If you're building a flexible career, **you need consistency in your support system**, even if your schedule isn't always the same.

The Staffing Process, Simplified

When you work with a physician-first agency, the steps to get started should be simple and straightforward. For example:

1. Apply

Fill out a short form and speak to a recruiter about your goals, preferences, and schedule availability.

2. Match

Get presented with shift options that align with your needs—across local, rural, or travel assignments.

3. Schedule

Choose shifts that work for you. Your agency handles logistics, credentialing, and onboarding.

4. Start

Show up, do what you do best—practice great medicine—without administrative headaches.

The Power of Physician-Centered Design

The best staffing agencies understand something simple, but rare: **Your schedule should serve your life—not the other way around.**

When you work with an agency that respects your time, protects your practice, and advocates for your growth, you don't just fill shifts. You build a career you actually want.

Coming up next: We'll explore how to stay sharp and clinically confident as a part-time EM physician—including how to choose the right shifts, stay relevant, and keep your skills strong without working full-time.

Chapter 4: Skill Retention & Clinical Relevance

One of the most common concerns among physicians going part-time is this: “Will I fall behind?”

It’s a valid question. In a fast-paced, high-stakes field like emergency medicine, staying sharp matters. But here’s the truth:

You don’t need full-time hours to stay clinically relevant—you just need intention.

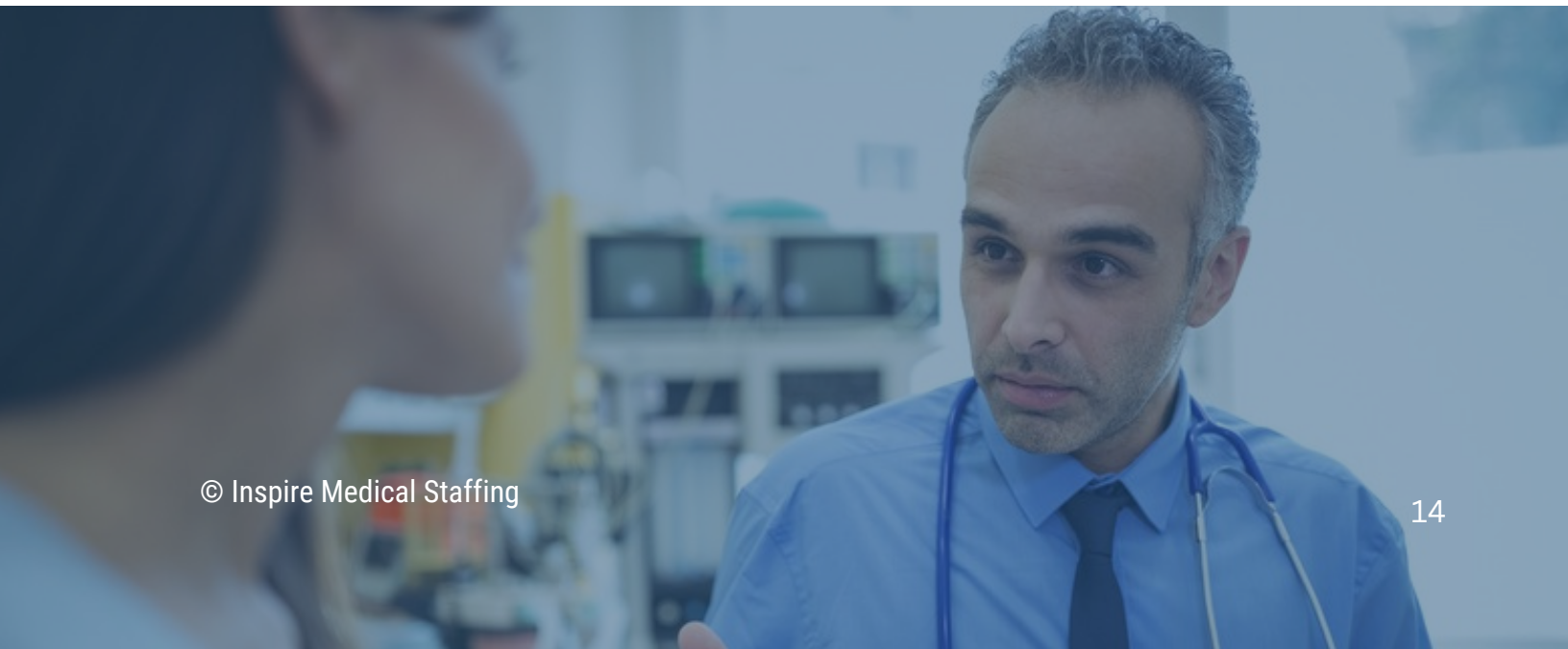
With thoughtful shift selection, strategic CME planning, and a bit of foresight, part-time physicians can not only stay current but also thrive professionally.

Why Clinical Confidence Doesn’t Require a 40-Hour Week

Let’s get this out of the way: Less time on the floor does not mean you’re less of a physician. In fact, many part-time EM doctors report:

- Greater focus and energy during shifts
- Lower burnout and mental fatigue
- More time to process cases, pursue learning, or explore other areas of interest

The key is to **optimize the time you do spend in the ED**—so that each shift builds your skills, not just checks a box.



4 Ways to Stay Sharp with Fewer Shifts

1. Be Selective About Shift Type

Not all shifts offer the same clinical exposure. If you're only working a few days a month, it's worth being strategic.

- **Trauma centers** keep you exposed to high-acuity cases.
- **Rural/solo EDs** build autonomy, decision-making, and procedure variety.
- **Fast-track/low-acuity shifts** can still offer skill repetition and efficiency training.

Your staffing partner can help you mix and match based on your learning goals.

2. Leverage High-Yield CME

Don't wait for big conferences to check off your CE credits. Use compact, targeted CME formats like. Here are some resources.

Recommended Podcasts

- **EM: RAP (Emergency Medicine Reviews and Perspectives)** – A monthly audio series packed with CME credits and the latest EM insights. A great on-the-go refresher. [CMEList+9EM:RAP+9home.hippoed.com+9exam-prep.org+1](#)
- **Emergency Medicine Cases (EM Cases)** – Featuring both in-depth roundtable discussions and "Best Case Ever" quick-fire episodes, this resource delivers practice-changing clinical pearls. It is a staple in the FOAMed community. [Emergency Medicine Cases+1](#)
- **ERcast (Hippo Ed)** – An entertaining and educational podcast offering CME while keeping your EM skills polished. [home.hippoed.com](#)
- **The Emergency Medical Minute Podcast** – Bite-size audio clips delivering focused clinical tips on key topics like toxicology, trauma, and pharmacology—ideal for listening during short breaks. [EMRA+11emergencymedicalminute.org+11Goodpods+11](#)

- **EMCrit** — A critically acclaimed podcast led by Dr. Scott Weingart, focused on critical care and resuscitation. Highly relevant for EM physicians seeking to refine their acute care skills. [Wikipedia](#)

Online CME Platforms & Courses

- **AAEM CME Online** — Offers a diverse library of 10–60-minute video modules covering topics such as trauma, stroke, opioid prescribing, and risk management. Available via AAEM membership or an affordable annual subscription (around \$99). [EM:RAP+8AAEM+8Emergency Medicine Cases+8](#)
- **ACEP CME** — A robust portal from the American College of Emergency Physicians, offering on-demand courses, webinars, and live event sessions curated for EM physicians. [ACEP](#)
- **Mayo Clinic Emergency Medicine CME** — Includes a full range of formats—live conferences, online courses, and podcasts—offering engaging content directly applicable to the ED. [Mayo Clinic](#)
- **AudioDigest Emergency Medicine CME** — Audio-based, CME-accredited lectures that you can listen to while commuting or during downtime, tracked within a user-friendly app. [Goodpods+15audio-digest.org+15gotoper.com+15](#)
- **BoardVitals EM CME Review** — Comprehensive question-based learning platform offering over 600 EM-focused items and 35 AMA PRA Category 1 credits—excellent for deep review or exam prep. [CMEList+1](#)
- **Original Emergency Medicine Boot Camp (CCME)** — Intensive, faculty-led EM course available in flexible formats that you can engage in at your own pace—great for refreshers or foundational reinforcement. [courses.ccme.org](#)

Build a rhythm—15 minutes of learning a few times a week goes a long way.

3. Stay in Touch with Your Peer Network

Medicine is social. Staying looped in with colleagues keeps your thinking sharp.

- Join physician-only EM forums or Slack groups
- Subscribe to journals or newsletters that review real-world cases.
- Ask to join M&M conferences, rounds, or teaching days at hospitals where you work.

It's not just about keeping up with science—it's about keeping your clinical mind engaged.

4. Say Yes to Leadership, Teaching, or Mentorship (When You Want To)

Part-time doesn't mean invisible. If you're interested in leadership or academic roles, there's still room to contribute:

- Mentor residents or PAs during shifts
- Take part in quality improvement or protocol reviews.
- Offer to precept or speak at local EM events.

The benefit? You stay “on the radar” while amplifying your voice in ways that don't require a full-time badge.

Physician Voices: Staying Relevant, Part-Time

“I only work eight shifts a month now, but I pick up at a trauma center. It keeps me on my toes—and I supplement with a high-acuity CME podcast on my commute.”

— Dr. A, EM Physician, Travel-Based Schedule

“I mentor new grads who rotate through the ED. Even part-time, you can shape the next generation and stay close to the latest tools and protocols.”

— Dr. K, Part-Time EM Physician & Preceptor

Final Word: Your Practice, Your Pace

- Stay clinically relevant
- Grow professionally
- Create more meaningful learning opportunities because they still have bandwidth available.

In emergency medicine, sharpness isn't defined by hours worked. It's characterized by focus, adaptability, and continual learning—none of which require a full-time badge.

In Chapter 5, we'll walk through how to plan your ideal part-time future—how to define your workload, make it sustainable, and keep growing long-term.

Chapter 5: Designing Your Flexible EM Future

You've made the decision: full-time emergency medicine isn't the right fit right now—or maybe ever again. Now what?

This chapter is about taking the next step from idea to implementation. Whether you're moonlighting, reducing shifts, or pivoting into locums, building a career that fits *your* life starts with intention and action.

Let's walk through the practical process of designing a flexible, fulfilling emergency medicine schedule—and making it stick.

Step 1: Define Your Ideal Month

Before choosing jobs, define what your perfect month looks like. Start with these core questions:

- How many shifts per month feels ideal for your current energy and obligations?
- What kind of facilities are you most comfortable in (urban trauma, rural solo, fast-track)?
- What days of the week are off-limits due to family or personal priorities?
- Are you open to travel? If so, how far and how often?

Use this input to sketch out a mock schedule. Even if you don't land it perfectly on the first try, it sets a clear direction for what "balanced" looks like.

 ***Pro tip:*** Block your personal time before booking shifts—treat it like non-negotiable clinical time.

Step 2: Prioritize What Matters Most

Every physician's reason for going part-time is different. Define your “why”—and use it to make smarter decisions about how and where to work.

- **More time with family?** Look for shifts that minimize travel and maximize efficiency.
- **Passion projects or side gigs?** Create a calendar with longer blocks of time off.
- **Avoiding burnout?** Choose facilities with supportive staff, lower volume, or hybrid telehealth options.
- **Financial stability?** Consider a mix of high-compensation rural shifts and local coverage.

Part-time is about control—and prioritizing the pieces of your life that matter most.

Step 3: Think in Seasons, Not Forever

Your needs will shift over time. Don't stress about designing a “forever” schedule. Instead, create a 3- to 6-month plan that fits your current season:

- New parent?
- Taking care of an aging family?
- Studying for boards?
- Pursuing a certification?

Revisit your schedule every few months and ask: Is this still working for me?

A good staffing partner will help you adapt as your life evolves.



Step 4: Use a Simple Tracking System

Part-time can get scattered without visibility. Create a basic system to track:

- Shifts worked vs. scheduled
- Hours/month and income/month
- Time off taken (and needed)
- Notes on sites you liked or didn't
- CME deadlines, licenses, and credentialing renewal dates

Even a simple spreadsheet or calendar makes it easier to stay organized and avoid last-minute stress.

Step 5: Think Beyond the Bedside

Your clinical time is just one part of your professional identity. Part-time work creates space to explore:

- Teaching or mentoring
- Business or entrepreneurial ventures
- Telemedicine or asynchronous consults
- Academic writing or speaking
- Volunteer or humanitarian work

Think of this as career expansion—not reduction. What could you start (or restart) with the time you reclaim?

“I went part-time thinking I’d be less busy. I ended up launching a small consulting firm and mentoring new grads at the same time. I feel more fulfilled now than I ever did working 16 shifts a month.”

— Dr. C, Part-Time EM + Entrepreneur

The Goal: Sustainability

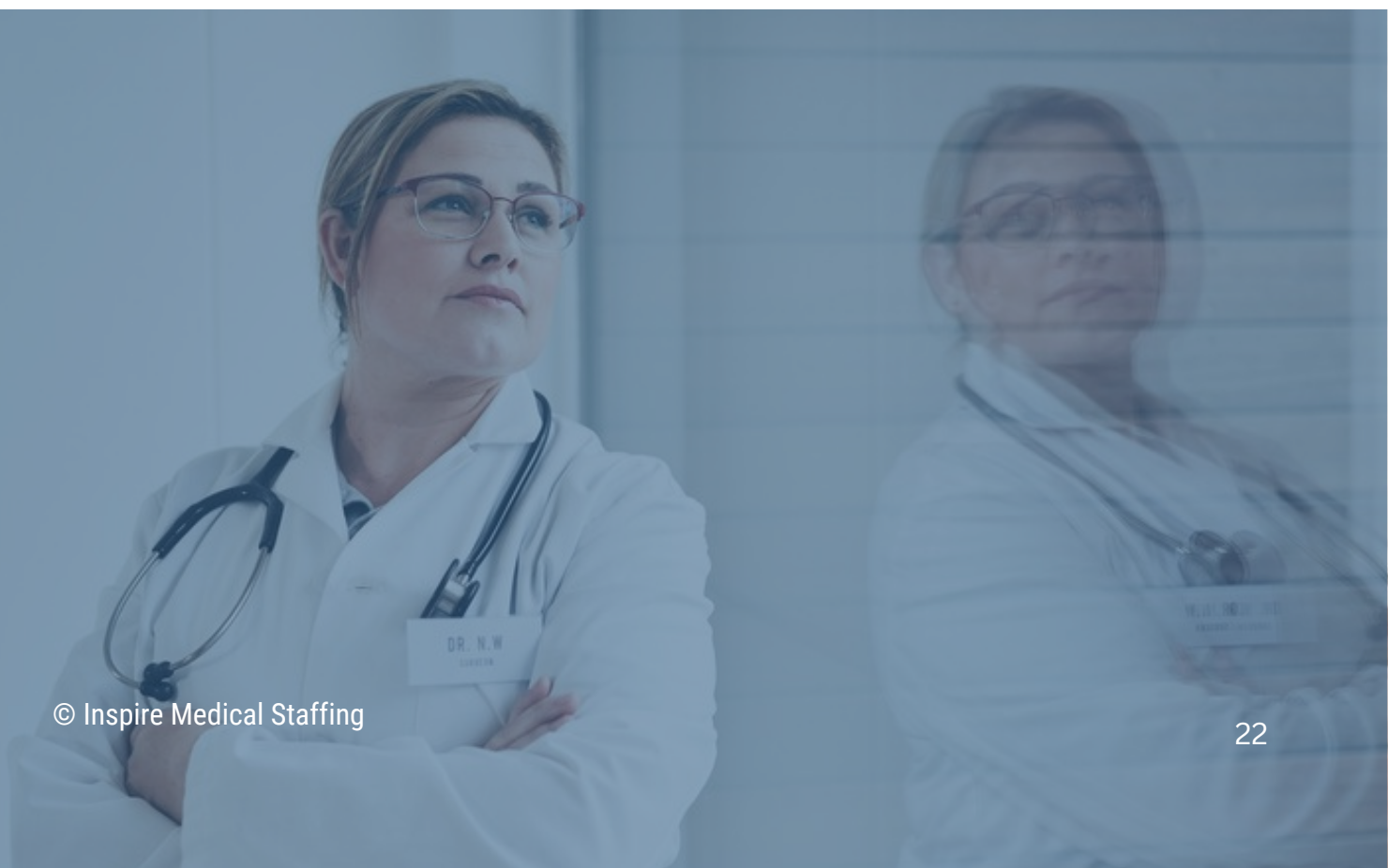
The right part-time plan allows you to:

- Continue practicing the medicine you love
- Protect your mental, emotional, and physical energy.
- Adapt to life's changes.
- And sustain your career longer, with more meaning.

Part-time emergency medicine isn't about doing less. It's about doing **better**—for your patients, and for yourself.

Up Next: Bringing It All Together

You've seen how part-time emergency medicine can work—and how it already is working for thousands of physicians nationwide. In the final section, we'll recap key insights and help you take the first step with confidence.



Conclusion: Your Career. Your Terms.

You've made it this far—because you know that something needs to change.

You may be seeking a better balance. Maybe you're early in your career and exploring options. Or perhaps you've spent years giving your all to full-time emergency medicine and are ready for a model that gives something back.

No matter where you're starting, part-time emergency medicine is a valid, innovative, and sustainable path.

Part-Time is Full Value

Let's put to rest the outdated idea that working less means doing less.

You can:

- Provide excellent care in fewer shifts
- Stay clinically sharp with the right strategy.
- Design a career that serves your health, goals, and personal life.
- Contribute meaningfully—on your own terms.

And most importantly, you can do all of this without sacrificing professional respect or personal fulfillment.

What You've Learned in This Guide

Over these five chapters, you've explored:

- **Why part-time EM is a rising trend**—and a strategic career move
- **How to build a schedule** that matches your needs and lifestyle
- **What to look for in a staffing partner** who supports you
- **How to stay sharp and relevant**, even with fewer shifts
- **How to map out your future** with intention, clarity, and confidence

You now have the tools and insights to start your own part-time EM journey—backed by strategy, not stress.

You Don't Have to Do It Alone

What is the most essential ingredient in a successful part-time path? Support.

Whether that means:

- Working with a trusted staffing agency that advocates for your goals
- Connecting with other physicians who've gone part-time
- Or simply permitting yourself to redefine success—

The help is out there. You don't need to navigate this alone.

Request a conversation with our Physician Recruiter or begin an application today.



Your Next Step

This guide was your first step.

Your next step is action—whether that's reaching out to a staffing partner, sketching your ideal schedule, or picking up a shift that fits better than the one you just left behind.

Start small. Start smart. But start.

You've earned a career that's flexible, fulfilling, and future-proof. This is emergency medicine—evolved.

Thank you for reading. Here's to your next chapter.

— The Inspire Medical Staffing Team

About Inspire Medical Staffing

Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, Inspire Medical is a physician-owned and locally focused emergency department management and staffing group dedicated to serving Kentucky's rural hospitals.

With a deeply hands-on approach—rooted in strong relationships with hospital leadership and their rural communities—Inspire offers highly trained, credentialed physicians the flexibility to practice emergency medicine without the burdens of on-call duties and rounds.

Whether you're a full-time EM physician, part-timer, moonlighter, or transitioning toward retirement, Inspire Medical empowers you with a rewarding practice that balances professional fulfillment with personal flexibility.

We handle credentialing, scheduling, malpractice coverage, and offer 24/7 support—letting physicians focus on patient care and reclaim quality of life.



Website

www.InspireMedical.com

Phone

800-939-4436

Address:

11501 Park Road, #23019, Louisville, KY 40223