

# The Symbiotic Relationship Between Gap-Year Students and Private Practice

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# Objectives:

- Identify: Identify the staffing shortages plaguing private practices
- Address: Address the difficulty finding quality stable staff members
- Innovate: Come up with innovative ideas of finding committed high quality staff members to join your practice

# Staffing Shortages

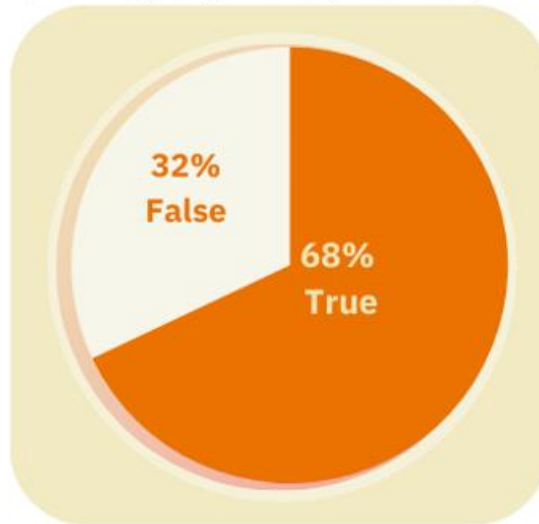
- COVID global pandemic transformed the job market – specifically the healthcare industry
- Over the last few years, private practices have suffered an impact on their hiring rates for competent and motivated staff. After a three-year national health emergency and over 1.1 million deaths, the US labor force has become smaller and tighter than before the pandemic as people dropped out of the job force
- More healthcare professionals are needed yet more healthcare workers have exited the workforce or changed careers to less dangerous and stressful non-clinical jobs
- Hospitals snatching any available staff with higher than industry pay and other benefits not sustainable in private practice.



# Has COVID really made a difference?

Has the staff turn over rates increased since the onset of the COVID pandemic?

\*Based on a survey of private practice pediatricians



# Impact of staffing shortages

- Less patients seen per day
- More overworked staff with higher rates of burnout
- Unsatisfied physicians
- Longer wait times
- Worse Patient Care
- Less “customer service”
- Less call backs
- Loss of patients

# LOSS OF REVENUE



“To every problem, there is a most simple solution.” ~ ~ Agatha Christie

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# Standard ways to search for staff

- Online search engines like Indeed, Monster, etc
- Local staffing agencies \$\$\$\$\$\$
- Facebook and other social media
- Local Tech School MA programs etc



# The graduate school crisis

- Harder to get in
- Great students can be less “marketable” due to poor testing, time off etc
- International Grad Students or Medical Graduates don’t have US experience

# What is a GAP-YEAR?

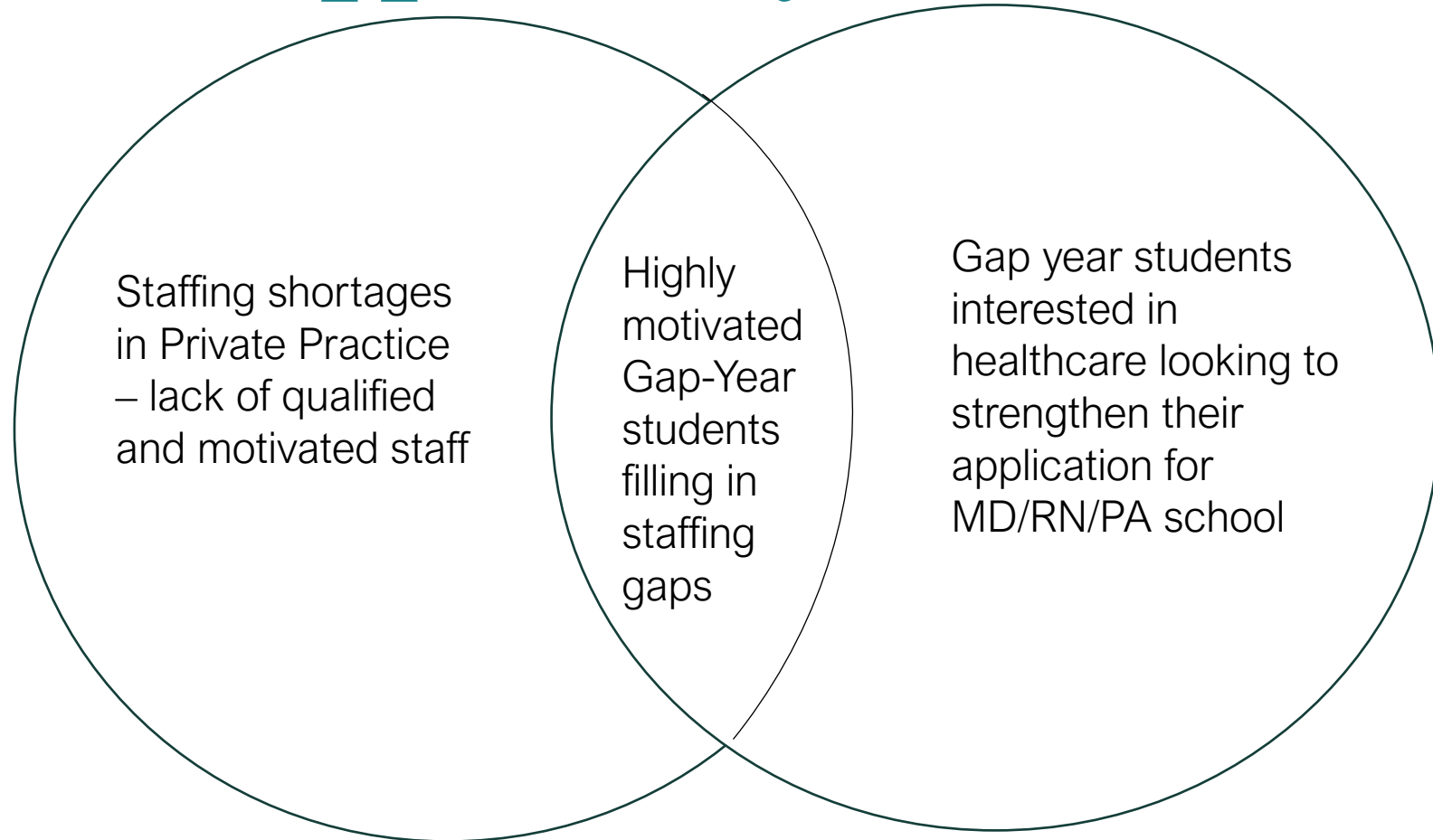
- More common for students interested in healthcare careers to take at least one gap year between their undergrad and medical/nursing school/professional school.
- Over 50% take a gap year to gain work experience in a healthcare setting or participate in research projects and improve their chances of acceptance into graduate programs.
- International Medical Graduates struggle to match into a Residency Program. According to the 2023 Match Program results - 32.4% of US citizen IMGs and 40.6% of non-US citizen IMGs failed to match into a first-year residency position. One of the most common barriers they face is the lack of hands-on experience in the US.

**“Innovation is taking two things that exist and putting them together in a new way.”**

Tom Freston



# Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity, not a threat ~





# SYMBIOSIS

This is your practice – a beautiful large giraffe

The giraffe needs to be cleaned of blood sucking ticks

Red-billed and yellow-billed oxpeckers need to eat and love the ticks and bugs

Birds eat the ticks and buggs off the giraffe – both benefit

# Pros

and

# Cons



# PROS

- Committed highly motivated students with a higher baseline education than most entry level medical assistants



# PROS

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- Easier and faster to train than new Medical Assistants

# PROS

- No need to break bad habits of experienced Medical Assistants

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# PROS

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- Rely on your recommendations so wanting to always do their best



# PROS

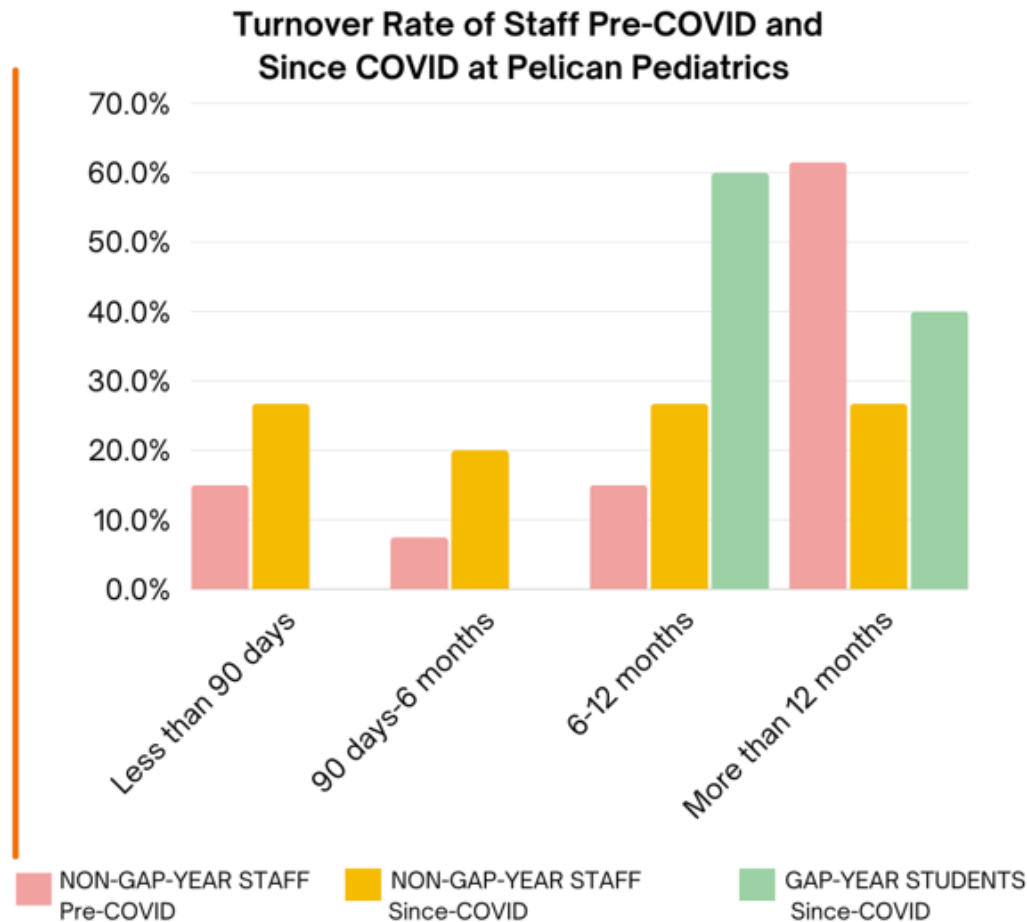
- In the case of International Medical Graduates – they may already be doctors, nurses etc who are highly overqualified but need the experience to be competitive for residency or other graduate position



# CONS

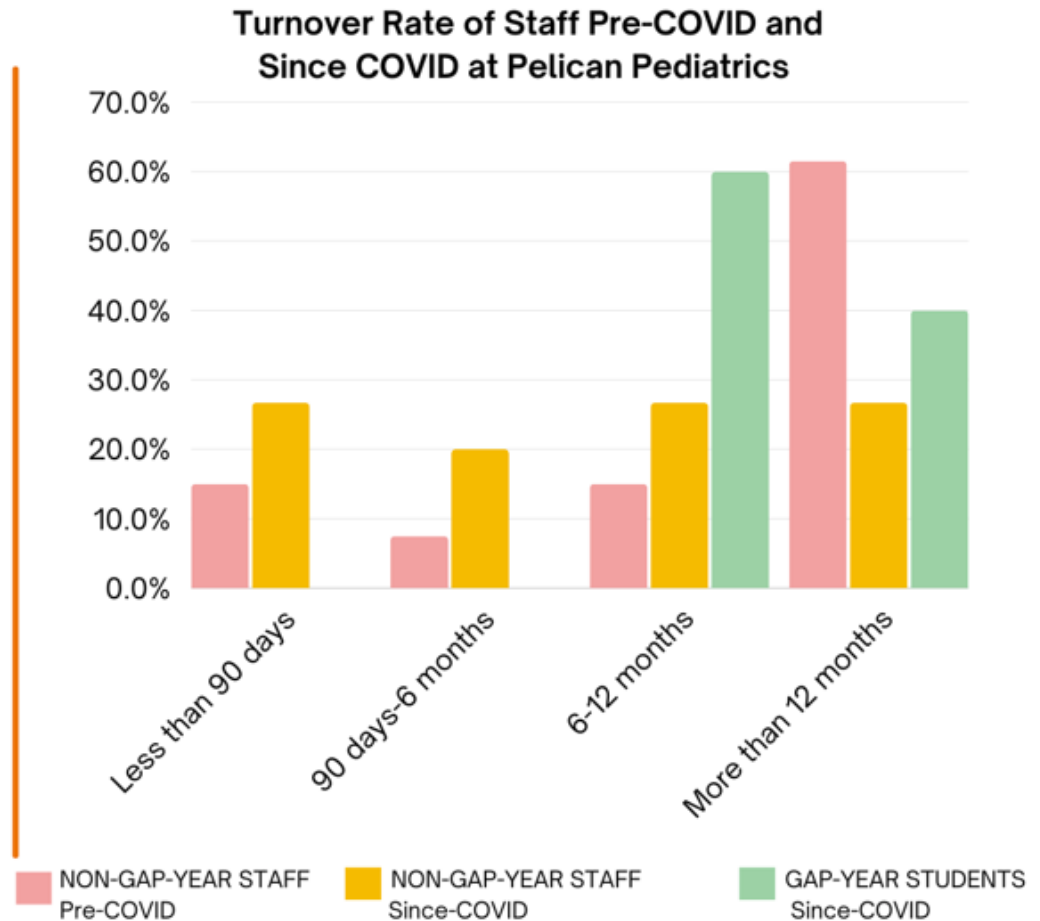
But they're only here for a  
“short amount of time”

# Turn Over Rates in Relation to COVID



- Since the onset of COVID – the average retention of a standard non-Gap year employee at Pelican Pediatrics greatly changed
- Pre-Covid – 62% of employees stayed for over a year (77% at least 6 months) with only 15% staying for less than 90 days
- Since COVID – Only 27% of employees stayed for over a year (54% at least 6 months) with 27% staying for less than 90 days!

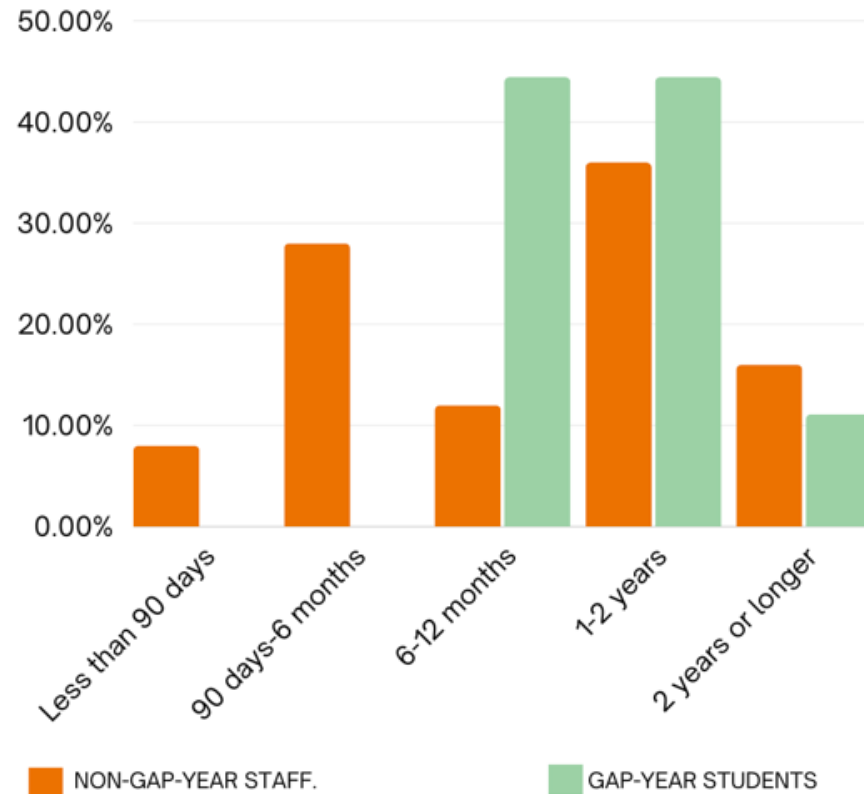
# Turn Over Rates in Relation to COVID at Pelican Pediatrics



- Since COVID – Only 27% of employees stayed for over a year (54% at least 6 months) with 27% staying for less than 90 days
- In Gap-Year students 40% of employees stayed for over a year (100% at least 6 months).

# Turnover Rate in Other Practices

Turnover Rate Comparison Between Non-Gap-Year Staff and Gap-Year Students Staff in Surveyed Private Practices



Since the onset of COVID – the average retention of a Gap year employee in private practice was about 11.5 months with 100% staying over 6 months

This is compared to standard employees where only 52% stayed for 6 months or more.

Source: A survey among private practice physicians from SOAPM, PCC, Facebook





# CONS

“BUT they have no medical office or clinical experience”

1. Many staff you hire are not trained anyway and some right out of school really have no real life experience
2. Quicker to train
3. Experienced people often come with bad habits and need to be “retrained”
4. Many actually have been physicians and nurses in other countries



# CONS

- Having to write letters of recommendation

Having to say goodbye when they move on to Medical School, Nursing School, PA School or residency!



# CONS

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A hand holding a white sign with the word "NOTHING" written in bold, black, uppercase letters. The sign is set against a solid red background.

**NOTHING**

# Are these Gap-Year students really great employees?

YES

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# WHERE CAN YOU FIND THESE MAGICAL UNICORNS???



# FINDING A UNICORN

STEP 1: Go to the magical forest

STEP 2: Wear a unicorn hunting suit

STEP 3: Bring a Unicorn Catcher



CATCH THAT UNICORN!

# **No really – how does one find these gap-year unicorns**

- LOCAL colleges, Universities – Be in touch with Pre-Med Advisor – once you get one you'll be inundated with requests
- Your local Synagogues, Churches, Social Clubs etc – everyone has a child or grandchild or nephew who “wants to be a doctor” but needs that experience boost
- Online groups for unmatched residents

# Are you really making a difference?





# Objectives Accomplished

- 1. Improved access to highly motivated and competent staff in private practice
- 2. Decreased staff turnover rate
- 3. Helped highly motivated candidates improve their chances of acceptance into graduate healthcare programs



# CONCLUSION

- Staffing shortages can be detrimental to the success of a private practice
- Relying solely on standard staff no longer sustainable due to the high turnover rates
- Hiring Gap-Year student and unmatched residents not only provides an untapped pool of medical talent to staff practice it impacts the future of healthcare by helping motivated people get into the healthcare industry



**Don't be a parasite – build a symbiosis!**

