



## **Getting Physicians Off the Sidelines with Improved Credentialing Technology**

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Depending on which estimates you look at, we as a nation are facing a physician shortage that could exceed 100,000 physicians within a decade. What makes that number even worse is the amount of hours of physician care that go unused because doctors are sitting on the sidelines waiting for their credentialing to be completed.

For the thousands of physicians who work full-time Locums Tenens, the slow, arcane system of physician credentialing is a tremendous source of frustration that has some waiting six months or more to obtain full privileging at a facility they are going to work at.

The problem with the current system is that every firm, group and institution must primary-source verify several pieces of information on each physician's file, and, when that physician chooses to work a new assignment, that lengthy, drawn-out process must be replicated all over again.

To combat this, many in our field are looking to blockchain technology, a decentralized general ledger that can't be hacked, as a means to solving this issue. Just recently, the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) announced it would be the latest organization to test the use of Blockcerts, an open-source standard built on top of Bitcoin that was developed by Learning Machine Technologies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab.

Essentially, what blockchain technology does is allow for a verified item to be noted as verified and saved on the blockchain as an immutable record which other institutions can then look at. Since the information cannot be changed or hacked, all parties can accept the verification of this information as valid.

In this model, once physicians are credentialed, they can have their credentialing file cryptographically secured and give others who need access to the information a key that allows them to view the files and verify what has been saved in the blockchain record. Tying official records such as verification forms, degrees and transcripts to the blockchain allows physicians to manage their own private profiles of medical verifications, sharing them as they see fit.

The hope is that replacing an archaic, inefficient process with one that is technologically driven and makes things easier for physicians, the process can be sped up dramatically. This will hopefully get thousands of physicians left on the sideline at any given time back in the care delivery game.