

What to look for in a PCP

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Biography/Disclaimer

- I am a primary care physician
- I run a primary care practice
- I teach primary care
- I do research about primary care
- ...especially Family Medicine...

I'm a little biased...

How to use this talk...

- To find a new primary care physician...
- To improve things with your current primary care physician...
- To help others talk to their primary care physicians...

What is Primary Care?

Primary Care

- Continuous
- First-contact
- Comprehensive
- Coordinated
- Also
 - Family-oriented
 - Community-oriented
 - Culturally competent

Primary Care

- In numerous studies around the world, primary care improves health.
 - It's the only part of medical care that does.

What is a PCP?

PCP

- Primary Care...
 - Physician?
 - Provider?
- MDs, DOs, NPs, PAs
- Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Ob-Gyn, Adolescent Medicine
 - (others depending on context)

PCP

- Family Medicine
- General Internal Medicine
- Pediatrics
- Ob-Gyn
- Nurse Practitioner
- Physician's Assistant

Primary Care Provider

- Relationship is the most important thing...
 - First contact
 - Continuous
 - Comprehensive
 - Coordinated

Primary Care Provider

- “Specialist in YOU”
- Expert tools
 - Communication – all forms
 - Breadth of knowledge, not depth
 - “That darn electronic record....”
 - Access

Primary Care Provider

- Expertise
 - Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
 - Undifferentiated Illness
 - Multimorbidity
 - “address [90-99]% of what walks in the door”

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H O U S E

M.D.



HOOVER

M.D.





Primary care...

- ...more than the doctor/provider
- The whole team is critical.



Patient Centered Medical Home

- Personal physician
- “Physician directed medical practice”
- Whole person orientation
- Care is coordinated
- Quality and safety
- Enhanced access to care
- Payment

Payment???

- Primary runs on small margins
- Current system pays mostly for visits and procedures

Payment???

- Payment for:
 - Non-visit work (forms, calls, etc.)
 - Coordination of care
 - Email/telephone consultation
 - Increased costs of technology
 - Cost savings *preserving* quality and satisfaction

New models of primary care

- “accountable care”
 - “capitation” with agreements for quality and patient satisfaction
- “direct primary care”
 - Your company contracts with a practice for accountable care
- “concierge medicine”
 - Fee for enhanced access

How can you help?

- Do your research
 - Word of mouth/referral
 - “Best Doctor” sites
 - Online reviews?

How can you help?

- Be prepared and organized
 - Know your medical history
 - Know your medications
 - Be familiar with your insurance
 - Know how long your appointment is

How can you help?

- Speak up
 - Lists are OK
 - Tell us what's on your mind
 - We all have the uncle with the weird medical opinions...might as well...
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Ask for an after-visit summary, and use it!
 - Go with a buddy

How can you help?

- NEVER ASSUME...always get the answers...
 - Test results
 - Referrals

Medline Plus

- When choosing a PCP, also consider the following:
 - Is the office staff friendly and helpful?
 - Is the office good about returning calls?
 - Are the office hours convenient to your schedule?
 - How easy is it to reach the provider? Does the provider use email?
 - Do you prefer a provider whose communication style is friendly and warm, or more formal?
 - Do you prefer a provider focused on disease treatment, or wellness and prevention?
 - Does the provider have a conservative or aggressive approach to treatment?
 - Does the provider order a lot of tests?
 - Does the provider refer to other specialists frequently or infrequently?
 - What do colleagues and patients say about the provider?
 - Does the provider invite you to be involved in your care? Does the provider view your patient-doctor relationship as a true partnership?

Medline Plus

- You can get referrals from:
 - Friends, neighbors, or relatives
 - Medical associations, nursing associations, and associations for physician assistants
 - Your dentist, pharmacist, optometrist, previous provider, or other health professional
 - Advocacy groups may be especially helpful to find the best provider for a specific chronic condition or disability

Medline Plus

- Many insurance plans limit the providers you can choose from
- Health insurance plan websites/directories
- Interview appointment or open house
- If no PCP → Urgent care for an urgent problem

<https://medlineplus.gov/>

Myths/Other comments

- Won't NPs and PAs do all the primary care in the future?

Myths/Other comments

- PCPs are either just “referral machines” or “gatekeepers.”

Myths/Other comments

- The more expertise/technology the better...

Myths/Other comments

- In a 15 minute visit, the PCP spends”
 - 30 min with someone else...
 - 10 min fighting with the electronic record
 - 2 minutes on an urgent phone call
 - 3 minutes on my history/physical

Objectives

- Describe and advocate for the benefits of primary care.
- Describe the different medical professionals that can comprise a primary care patient-centered medical home.
- Maximize your relationship with your primary care provider.















