

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Direct Primary Care (DPC)?**

DPC is a relatively new way to deliver high-quality, comprehensive healthcare from a doctor for a low, flat monthly fee.

DPC doctors have chosen to break away from the current expensive, inefficient, complicated fee-for-service healthcare system to provide medical care at a reasonable, transparent price. I work for you, the patient, and leave out the middlemen (i.e. insurance companies and corporate employers).

Practically speaking, DPC is a membership model for healthcare. Every patient pays a flat monthly subscription fee as a member of the DPC practice.

### **What are the benefits of DPC membership?**

First and foremost is access to me, your doctor. You can expect same day or next business day appointments. You will be given a phone number and email address to contact me directly. Text messaging and telehealth visits are encouraged. The best thing? You will not be charged extra for these services. Many issues/questions can be handled over the phone or via telehealth, text or email, saving you valuable time by not having to come to the office for an appointment. Second, for those issues that do require an in-person appointment, you can expect to spend as much time as necessary to deal with the issue at hand.

This differs from a fee-for-service, insurance-based model where a doctor does not get paid unless the patient comes in for an appointment. This is why doctors who practice under this model need to see 18-20 (or more!) patients per day, leading to brief, rushed 15-20 minute appointments; not enough time to manage most medical problems effectively. In addition, most insurance plans have out-of-pocket expenses (i.e. copays and deductibles). These costs add up.

### **How will a DPC save me money?**

As mentioned above, you won't have to pay a co-pay for your visits with us. Also, you'll be able to avoid many visits altogether by sending your questions directly to us via email and text; something you won't get from a traditional practice. We've also negotiated deals for prescription medications, blood tests, X-rays and other imaging studies on your behalf.

More importantly, since you receive comprehensive primary care from us, you can likely cut back on your insurance premiums. Most DPC patients purchase a high-deductible, low-premium insurance plan so they're covered in the case of a major health issue, but leave the rest of their healthcare to us.

Another money-saving opportunity as a member of our DPC practice is avoiding expensive emergency room and urgent care visits. It's estimated that 2/3 of all emergency room visits are actually non-emergent. In Arizona the average ER bill is almost \$2300. If we can save you one ER

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visit in 2½ years of membership, your membership fees have paid for themselves. With almost 10 years of experience working in the ER, I'm comfortable advising patients on what is truly an emergency... and what is not.

### **Is DPC the same as Concierge?**

You may have heard of a similar model called "concierge medicine". While there are similarities with DPC, the two are different in some fundamental ways. For starters, concierge practices often bill your insurance in addition to a monthly fee. This means they're still a part of the insurance industry's complex reimbursement system. This gets reflected in the monthly fee; the average concierge practice bills \$200-300 per month. By comparison, DPC memberships are a fraction of the cost because a DPC practice does not need to spend valuable resources fighting with insurance companies to get paid.

### **What if I want to cancel my DPC membership?**

You can cancel your membership at any time with a 30-day written notice. However, if you decide to rejoin the practice there must be written approval along with a \$225 re-enrollment fee.

### **Do you take Medicare?**

Medicare patients are welcome to join our practice. However, our practice has opted out of Medicare. This prohibits anyone (physician or patient) from billing Medicare or seeking Medicare reimbursement for services provided through Helios Health AZ. Medicare patients can still use their benefits for other healthcare needs such as labs, imaging, visits to specialists, etc.

### **Do I have to be a member to be seen?**

No. The cost for non-members is \$300/hour, which can be broken down into 15 minute segments. See our Membership Benefits & Pricing page, for member and non-member services.

### **Do you provide immunizations?**

At this time we do not. Immunizations require significant resources to maintain but are readily available at local health departments and pharmacies.

### **What medical conditions do you treat?**

We care for a range of issues from common acute problems like colds, flu, strep, and minor injuries, to chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. We also offer hormone therapy using oral, topical, and pellet delivery options.

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