

## It's About Time: A Concierge Practice

By Allison McCarthy



Richard Delany, MD, FACC, an internal medicine physician in Milton, Massachusetts, wanted more time with his patients: time to listen, time to educate, time to implement preventive strategies, time to coordinate total care.

In short, he longed to practice medicine as he saw fit, not as dictated by medical and insurance systems where drug formulary choices and referral paperwork—not coordination of patient care—were the major focus. Juggling as many as 20 patients a day, sometimes 6 days a week, in between reams of paperwork was exhausting and frustrating.

He contemplated retirement. He chose concierge medicine instead.

In January 2003, with assistance from Corporate Health Group, he converted to a concierge practice model of care, limited to only 350 patients, who pay an annual membership fee for expanded services. Those services include: same-day or next-day extended appointments; no office wait time; 24/7 access to medical information and advice via telephone and Web site; on-line access to medical records, tests and appointment scheduling; and yearly consultations with a recommended physical fitness trainer, chiropractor and nutritionist.

His new practice also allows him to develop personalized preventive care plans to help patients minimize their risk for certain chronic diseases by using innovative diagnostic techniques when appropriate, such as DNA/gene testing, anti-aging programs and herbal remedies.

Delany sees concierge medicine as a step closer to creating a viable system where physicians can fulfill their goal of delivering high-quality acute, chronic and preventive care. In his view, concierge medicine, taking hold in pockets around the country, allows for effective coordination of care by caring and conscientious physicians.

For those patients who signed on the dotted line, the convenience, personalized service, and VIP treatment are well worth the annual investment. For Delany, the chance to practice unhurried medicine and provide thorough care and total coordination is priceless.



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