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Potential for 50 Million New Uninsured Patients Entering the Primary Care System Concerns Physicians and Healthcare Leaders
Hybrid Concierge models emerging as viable option to expand access to PCPs; but first myths surrounding model must be overcome

Rockville Centre, NY - September 23, 2009 - With an estimated 50 million people potentially entering the healthcare system if coverage for the uninsured is expanded, industry leaders nationwide are concerned about how to provide primary care coverage to new and existing patients. Research indicates that many areas of the country already have severe shortages of primary care physicians (PCP); many in primary care are moving to other specialties or limiting new patients; and the number of medical students entering primary care programs continues to dwindle.

"We now live in an era where it is increasingly difficult for patients to find good primary care physicians," notes Wayne Lipton, founder of Concierge Choice Physicians, the company that pioneered an innovative [*hybrid model of concierge care*](#). "If we are going to save primary care medicine, we have to find ways to make its practice attractive to the best physicians and accessible to as many patients as possible."

Hybrid concierge models allow patients within a practice to choose the option - traditional or concierge - that best meets their needs. Patients who opt to stay in a traditional practice may remain with their chosen physician.

Lipton believes that the hybrid model of concierge medicine may make primary care a more attractive option for young doctors and retain those still in practice. The hybrid model allows physicians to offer a concierge choice when as few as 50 of their patients choose the option. However, myths and misunderstandings about what concierge medicine is and is not are keeping many physicians from exploring important options like the hybrid model.

Lipton and his colleagues at CCP have developed a list of the top myths and misunderstandings physicians may have about the hybrid model of concierge care.

MYTH 1 - *No one will want to join a concierge practice in today's economy.*

Reports indicate that interest in concierge practices has never been higher. Because of the growth of more affordable options, a wide range of consumers who want a more personal relationship with their physician are joining concierge practices. Many physicians who offer a hybrid model are finding they reach their maximum number of patients within just a few weeks of announcing the offering. Retention rates for most concierge practices remain well over 90 percent.

MYTH 2 - *I don't want to have to "fire" any of my patients.*

Many physicians have heard about concierge and considered it as an option at some point. However, despite the economic and time pressures they now face, many physicians have decided they don't want to adopt a practice model that forces some patients out of their practice. With a hybrid model, physicians do not have to ask any patients to leave their practice. They simply offer a concierge option for their patients that prefer it. This approach helps to ensure needed PCPs remain in the healthcare

system while creating a more attractive practice model that can help to attract and retain quality PCPs.

MYTH 3 - *I practice in a diverse neighborhood. A concierge program won't work here.*

Even in moderate income areas it is possible to start a successful concierge program. Truck drivers, teachers, machinists, retirees and others with moderate incomes, are now actively seeking out concierge options. The main attribute these people have in common is not high incomes - it's a desire for a more meaningful and personal relationship with their physician, one that emphasizes, convenience, prevention and wellness.

MYTH 4 - *I will never get enough patients to create a profitable concierge practice.*

In full-model concierge practices, physicians must attract a minimum of 300 to 400 full-paying patients to sustain a viable model. However, in the hybrid model - physicians only need 50-150 patients to join. "Not every physician can build a concierge practice," notes Lipton. "You have to be a good doctor committed to meeting the needs of patients. We work closely with interested physicians to ensure they have the patient based as well as personal and professional characteristics necessary to build a successful concierge practice."

MYTH 5 - *Patients that have my direct phone line will take up too much of my time.*

One of the more popular features of concierge practices for patients is that they are often given the physicians' private line and/or cell phone. Some physicians are concerned that patients might abuse that service. However, only the small percentage of patients participating in the concierge program receive the direct contact information. Most physicians report that members of concierge programs are generally very respectful and use the service more as a lifeline than a primary source of communication.

MYTH 6 - *I can do it by myself.*

Setting up a successful concierge practice takes time and expertise. Despite their best intentions, most physicians typically are so busy caring for patients and managing their practice that they do not have the time and resources to spend developing a new practice model. Companies like [Concierge Choice Physicians](#), with experience in setting up practices, including market analysis, communication with patients, training of staff and marketing, can take the burden off physicians and help to implement successful concierge programs.

"We recognize that primary care physicians are struggling to find ways to create viable practices," Lipton said. "We believe the hybrid model provides the solution that so many physicians today need. It provides an important revenue stream, a chance to better connect with patients, and helps to reduce some of the hours many physicians have had to put in at ERs and nursing homes to get needed revenue. Plus, the hybrid concierge model doesn't cost the government, healthcare or consumers a thing - it is purely an option of choice."

About Concierge Choice Physicians

Concierge Choice Physicians™ is a private company headquartered in Rockville Centre, New York. Concierge Choice Physicians offers a hybrid medical practice option so that doctors can practice both traditional and concierge-style medicine within a single practice. The company works with medical practices in Florida, Arizona, New York, New Jersey, Nevada, Delaware, Virginia, Massachusetts, Texas, Maryland, Illinois, Connecticut and California. For more information, visit www.choice.md or call 877-888-5590.

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