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Doctor takes more personal approach to medicine

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By Stephanie Brown

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How much would you pay to have 24/7 access to your doctor?

Harry and Regina Laskowski of Westville are willing to pay \$1,500 each for Dr. David Laskin, their primary care physician of more than 20 years.

"We like the personal treatment that we're going to get and the fact that we can have a doctor when you call within 6 to 12 hours," said Harry Laskowski, 80.

After 26 years practicing traditional model medicine in West Deptford, Laskin opened a new practice this past week that focuses on personalized and preventive health care.

Typical advantages of this new model, commonly known as concierge healthcare, include same-day appointments, longer examination times, home delivery of medications, physician coordination of specialty-care referrals, and around-the-clock telephone, pager, and e-mail access to physicians.

"For me, the bottom line is attempting to return to the way that medicine should be delivered, the old-fashioned way where a doctor can really make a difference in a patient's life," Laskin said. "What's a better, finer way to practice medicine and to be able to achieve greater patient satisfaction and better results."

Laskin has signed up with MDVIP, a concierge medical company based in Florida. MDVIP currently has over 221 affiliated physicians in 22 states and more than 74,000 affiliated patients nationally.

MDVIP's doctors agree to limit their practice to 600 patients, as opposed to the average caseload of 2,500.

"The way medicine has evolved presently is that the average primary care doctor sees a very high volume of patients and most of care is reactive versus proactive care," said Dr. Bernard Kaminetsky, medical director and founding physician for MDVIP. "There clearly is a need for a model whereby a doctor can provide the necessary preventive services."

Kaminetsky said limiting a practice to 600 patients allows a physician more time to provide extensive preventive care and wellness programs, as well as care for acute and chronic illness. They are also able to provide a new focus on individualized attention and lifestyle planning.

Laskin's caseload was averaging 2,000 before he made the switch. Those who choose not to stay with him were given assistance in choosing a new physician.

"That's crucial, you cannot abandon people," he said.

The annual fee covers preventive care services including a comprehensive annual physical examination and personalized wellness plan. All other medical care is handled through patients' existing insurance plans.

A portion of the annual fee goes to the doctor and the rest goes to MDVIP to help in the transition process, Kaminetsky said.

The fee can be paid quarterly, semi-annually or annually by check or credit card.

"If you break it down, it's \$4 a day, \$125 month, \$1,500 a year," Laskin said. "Unfortunately in 2008, \$4 a day for healthcare is less than a gallon of gasoline."

Laskin is still taking patients for his new practice located at 400 Grove Road in Thorofare. Those interested should call his office at (856) 628-8120.