



## Approaching Businesses to Promote DPC as a Group Benefit

By: Dr. Jeff Davenport, One Focus Medical

In this article, I want to share with you my experiences regarding Direct Primary Care physicians and practices marketing directly to business owners. As the first Direct Primary Care (DPC) practice in the state of OK, and a member of the Free Market Medical Association, I have extensive experience in breaking the ice in areas where there is no knowledge of DPC, and the concept seems too good to be true.

*The Hard Truth: There is no universal approach. There is no magic bullet.*

My practice opened in April of 2014. Since my opening, it feels as if I have spent most of my time explaining the concept of DPC, how DPC works, and why it is a better model for care. DPC is a far superior choice for access, physician-patient interaction, high quality care, and cost efficiency. Every aspect of DPC is an improvement to our current, broken, system.

Some business owners are astute to the realities of our system and see the benefit of offering DPC as an employee benefit immediately. Other business owners feel the concept is too outside the box, and a few even suspect that the concept must be either illegal or cheat the system.

### Framing the Discussion

In my discussions with these business owners, I make sure to discuss the economics behind the current system and the differences from DPC. Self-Funded employers really understand this reality better than anyone. When a business is self-funded, the medical claims are paid out of their own operating budget. There is no deep pocket of an insurance company propping them up. All of the claims dollars that are saved go directly to the bottom line of the company.

It has been proven that when more money is spent on primary care—especially an independent DPC doctor—the savings from the reduced number of emergency and complicated care add up rapidly.

In a study recently published by Qliance, an established DPC aggregator for employers, it was shown the savings on overall medical spend drastically outweighed the increase in primary care costs. Studying several businesses over a period of years, they compared traditional fee-for-service primary care with the more comprehensive Direct Primary Care model. These employers showed a 139% increase in the primary care expenditures, however, every other care type was reduced.

- 53% decrease in ER visits
- 16% decrease in in-patient hospital days
- 58% decrease in higher-cost specialist visits
- 66% decrease in advanced radiology/imaging
- 77% decrease in surgeries

### **The ultimate exchange financially was \$2000 per employee per year in health care savings!**

We all know that the financial benefits are clear. This needs to always be effectively communicated to any employer you are speaking with. The benefit to employees is another important area to point out.

Imagine a health benefits package you are able to tell all of your current and future employees that they have access to their doctor by phone, text, or email—access all day, every day, even on weekends. Knowing that they have a personal physician at their fingertips just like someone famous like Brad Pitt, Kevin Durant, or the President has. That's a pretty strong recruiting and retention tool.



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Not only is DPC something that individual employees can appreciate, but it is important to note that absenteeism due to illness is greatly reduced. Happy, healthy, productive employees are a dream of every business owner. When this can be achieved in a low cost way, the owners really win big.

## **Business Partners**

Ultimately each business is different, and these differences are very apparent once the owner makes a commitment to DPC for his or her employees.

One of my business clients writes a check annually that pays for every employee. Some of the employees of this business only use my services for urgent care, which is still a huge savings for this self-funded employer. The owner wishes his employees to have stable, frequent access to medical services so they are not absent due to illness or visit an after-hours clinic with sub-standard care.

Another business client requires that the employee pay the monthly fee directly. The monthly fee, or a portion of the fee, is then reimbursed upon receipt of the invoice. In this fashion, the employer ensures that they are not promoting one physician over another and that the decision to use a DPC is entirely up to the employee with no coercion or pressure implied.

Paying half the membership fees, requiring the employee to pay the other half, is the method of a third client. They have a desire to ensure the employee place a value of ownership on their care.

## **Moving Forward with Businesses**

Even after much time and practice talking to businesses about DPC and its benefits, I find that it is still difficult for businesses to embrace DPC as a better health model for employees.

Some of the reluctance can be attributed to unfamiliarity of the concept. Another hurdle for businesses that have employees spread over a large area, is that DPC is still new enough that many areas are lacking DPC.

To overcome some of these difficulties and increase your business client base, it is imperative for the DPC physician to visit businesses, teaching them the benefits; including the superior financial, medical, service, quality, and access.

It is also important that business owners visit their local doctors and demand more Value—better care at lower price. Businesses need to support independent physicians before they all become hospital employees.

Physicians that eliminate third party payers, hospital employment, and claim filing staff from their practice reduce overhead significantly, which leads to better savings for the patients. Businesses do not file insurance claims to change the oil on fleet vehicles; neither should they encourage employees to file insurance claims for colds, sprained ankles, or stitches.

For every business owner that reads this, I would love responses to the questions below.

- How would you prefer to be approached about Direct Primary Care?
- Do you think DPC would help your business? Why or why not?
- What are your concerns about the healthcare of your employees?

Your answers will help me and my fellow free market warriors spread the message about Direct Primary Care. We are working in concert with the Free Market Medical Association to make DPC famous to all patients and employers.

I would love to hear from you at [DrD@onefocusmedical.com](mailto:DrD@onefocusmedical.com). Also, feel free to contact the Free Market Medical Association at [mfreedman@fmma.org](mailto:mfreedman@fmma.org) or 1-800-901-FMMA.