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Dear perspective patient:

Thank you for your interest in our practice. We pride ourselves in providing exceptional, personalized care. Our focus is diagnostic medicine, preventive care and management of chronic diseases.

First Internal Medicine has changed to a membership based model of care (also called ‘concierge medicine’). In order for you to become a patient in the practice, you will need to pay an annual fee or ‘retainer’. If you do not become a member, we will not be able to accept you in the practice.

The membership model is necessary in order for me to provide the following services which, in my opinion, are essential components of excellent medical care but are not reimbursed by traditional health insurance:

- First of all, I need to restrict my patient panel so that **I can be available to see you for any emergencies** on a short notice, and **to be able to spend enough time with you** to address all your health concerns regardless of their number or complexity.
- I want to continue providing excellent service by **keeping you, the patient, as my first priority** rather than surrendering to health insurance companies’ requests to limit cost in exchange for a payment from them, which insurance companies call ‘shared savings’.
- I also want to make myself available to you via telephone, email and videoconferencing to save you time by **addressing simple health issues without an office visit.**
- Finally, I want to expand my practice to offer more integrative, holistic approach to care by incorporating advanced diagnostic techniques (including genetic testing) to personalize your health care.

Before dismissing this idea, I would like to encourage you to learn more about concierge medicine. You may start at www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concierge_medicine. Another good overview is at www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/07/the-case-for-concierge-medicine/374296/. You will find out that what may sound like an unaffordable luxury is, in fact, a necessity in order to receive quality medical care, and it is quite affordable.

The cost of our concierge service which we call **PERSONAL VIP CARE** is \$3,000 per person, \$5,000 for 2 adults or \$6,000 for a family of four, billed annually.

The attached table outlines numerous differences between a typical health insurance based care and the concierge **Personal VIP Care** program.

The most important difference is that, in exchange for an annual fee, Personal VIP Care members will have the ability to contact me via my personal cell phone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Second most important differentiation is that **I will see you within 24 hours** (most often the same day) and **spend as much time with you as is necessary** given the nature of your complaint.

Personal VIP Care members can enjoy numerous other benefits such as consultations via telephone or email (without an office visit), same day appointments for Urgent Care, and longer appointments to allow discussion of multiple problems at one visit.

The fee for Personal VIP Care includes all services available in the office (see contract for details which services are included) regardless of insurance mandated copays, deductible or coinsurance. In fact, we will not bill insurance at all unless you instruct us to do so (e.g. for meeting annual deductible).

Please note, however, that even though many services are included in the Personal VIP Care, outpatient SERVICES PERFORMED BY INDEPENDENT VENDORS such as laboratory testing, imaging, or consultations by specialists ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE ANNUAL FEE; neither are services performed in the Emergency Department or hospital. Therefore, we strongly recommend maintaining an active health insurance policy to cover these services.

In order to provide exceptional care to all my patients, I limit the size of my patient panel to 300-400 patients (as opposed to 2,500 – 3,000 patients per physician in a regular practice). Since 2016 when my practice converted to concierge medicine we have been growing steadily. Initially, we offered a two-tiered service – Basic Membership without 24/7 access and Personal VIP Care as described here. As the demand has been high, as of July 1, 2018 we no longer offer Basic Membership for new patients.

To become a patient in our office, please complete the Personal VIP Care Agreement and forward it to our office with a form of payment. If you do not wish to enter credit card information on the Agreement, please bring the Agreement to the office in person or email us the Agreement and call the office with credit card information. **We will schedule your first visit within one business day of the receipt of the agreement.**

Our practice also offers consultation service without long-term commitment. The intention of this service is twofold: 1) to provide opportunity for patients to get a second opinion; and 2) to provide patients considering joining our concierge practice an opportunity to evaluate us.

The cost for an initial consultation with one follow-up visit is \$500.

Please note that **our consultation service covers care for a defined period of time** (i.e. between initial and the first follow-up visit. It does not include phone consultations or other benefits of Personal VIP Care, and I do not become your personal or primary care physician. It is a one-time deal; if you wish to continue receiving care from us, you will need to join the practice and pay the annual fee. If you decide to join the practice within 3 months of the initial consultation, the cost of consultation will be included in the annual fee.

I strongly believe that concierge medical care is the right way to provide high quality care to everyone with complex or chronic medical conditions, or to all those who are serious about prevention and health maintenance. I would like to welcome you as my patient and support you to make the right decision for you or your family. I am personally available to answer any questions you might have. You may contact me via email at membership@denvermd.net or call my direct line **303-708-0007**.

I hope that you will join the practice or schedule a consultation as soon as possible. Please send us your Personal VIP Care Agreement without delay to regain, improve or maintain your health.

Respectfully,

Igor Huzicka, MD
Principal & Founder
First Internal Medicine and
The Foundation for Better Healthcare