

Spring is here! (finally)

It kind of felt like that winter was never going to end, right? Between school interruptions, back and forth weather, and sicknesses abounding, it felt like we were all in choppy waters. But the warm weather is here and Spring Break is approaching and I'm hoping for a more "Standard" next season. We continue to love serving our patients in our new Direct Primary Care model.

-Dr. Stewart



New data on Direct Primary Care



There hasn't been much research on Pediatric Direct Primary Care to this point. The DPC model started with family practices (there's about 3000 of those in the US) and has "worked its way down" to pediatric practices, and it's a growing field as we (including families) are seeing the drawbacks and pains of trying to deal with insurance companies and their regulations on care. A group out of Pennsylvania put together a data collection survey to pediatrics DPC providers around the US and the results were promising! To summarize, most offices are small with only 1 provider, some with 2. 40% have been open for less than a year, so there are shifting tides in the healthcare landscape. Our pricing structure and price point fall close to the average. For the pediatricians surveyed, 94% are "happier" compared to their old job, and I am a staunch believer that when your doctor is energized and happier, patients receive better care!

March Newsletter

Measles outbreak, social media, vaccines, what you should know!

Let me lead with this: It is getting incredibly difficult for parents to know where to get accurate, meaningful information regarding how to navigate their child's health. **The internet has opened everyone up to a very "noisy" landscape** where there are innumerable opinions, soap boxes, and streams of misinformation. It's hard to know, as a parent, who is looking out for you and who is trying to make a viral splash for personal gain. I'm in that sphere too and feel it (though most of my social media use is golf videos or sports highlights from UK and the Reds/Bengals). Below, **I'll include some voices that I've found that I really enjoy and generally put out good information**, because it's valuable and can be incredibly helpful as a parent! Some pediatricians out there aren't able to acknowledge that their families are (and will continue) getting information from social media, and that's a disservice to all involved.

We've seen this on full display with the current Measles outbreak. I just checked, and there have been 222 cases reported. 79% in kids <19 years old. 94% of those affected are unvaccinated and 4% have only had 1 vaccine. The Measles vaccine is given first at 12 months, then again at 4 years old. It is studied and safe to give >6 months old if a child is traveling to an area where measles is more prevalent (up to that point most infants still have antibodies from mom in their blood stream and provide some level of protection that wanes around that time).

So where does that leave us? Hear from me that it's hard raising kids right now with all the noise, and it feels like vaccines have been put squarely in the cross-hairs. **It's ok to ask questions, do your own research, express hesitations, or tell me about the random thing you saw on Instagram that had you concerned.** I just ask that you bring them to me, not the internet! I'm a firm believer this is part of a pediatrician's job, and I want to be invited in on the process of navigating information. Thankfully in the DPC model, I have plenty of time to actually listen to families and make sure we get to a spot that we're all comfortable with .

Social Media Recommendations

- Phil Boucher, MD (@PhilboucherMD)
- Jennifer Anderson (@kids.eat.in.color)
- @CuriousParenting
- Dr. Mona (@PedsDocTalk)
- Caitlin Slavens and Chelsea Bodie (@mamapsychologists)

March Newsletter

Last thing on Measles

Measles is a bit unique. It starts as a very “flu-like” illness with high fevers and cough, then a stereotypical rash (starts on the head and works its way down) develops as well as whitish-blue spots in the mouth. It can be serious, 17% of those infected in the current outbreak have been hospitalized. A measles infection presents two long term risks for the infected individual. The first is called “immune amnesia” a phenomenon where the virus “wipes out” the immune system’s good antibodies and leaves the individual susceptible to bacteria and viruses that otherwise wouldn’t have been an issue (because of vaccination or previous infection). And second, it can lead to this weird disease called SSPE that causes brain inflammation 6-10 years after infection and is critically dangerous (it was on an early episode of “House,” for what it’s worth.)



Office Logistics:

I will be out of town 3/12-14 as well as 3/20. As always, if you need us for a sick visit that day, please reach out and we can have you seen by Dr. Johnson at the Norton Commons location. I'll be available by phone as well if you need something that can be handled virtually!

Extras:

- We're pushing for Google reviews to help our online presence! **If you've had a good experience, let us know online!**
- More than anything else, please reach out if there is anything we can do to make navigating your child's healthcare easier. This office is designed with you in mind, and we want our actions to reflect that. We seek out feedback and find it helpful in making this place better for our families and patients!
- Remember that we are now offering formal Psychological testing (discounted for members) with Emily Moran