





**D P C**  
**SUMMIT**

# Employed vs Owning: Comparing Options for DPC

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- ▶ Navigate to <https://aafp1.cnf.io/> and tap the session titled "Employed vs Owning in DPC"
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## Learning Objectives

1. Describe the range of employment and practice models available to physicians entering Direct Primary Care (DPC).
2. Compare the risks, benefits, and trade-offs of different DPC employment and ownership models.
3. Evaluate how various employment options align with individual professional goals, practice sustainability, and patient care priorities.



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## INTRO

- Paths for Direct Primary Care Physician
- Owner
- Employed
- Differences:
  - Autonomy
  - Risk
  - Learning Curve
  - Income Potential
  - Work-life balance



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## My DPC Journey

- Employed in 2-physician owner DPC clinic
- 2-year contract
- Contract extension negotiations become termination
- Open SparksMD Family Medicine
  - Initially, 1 Physician solo practice, Sole Owner
  - Now onboarding second physician
- After full panel as owner, what next?



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## Employed DPC Experience

- Pros:
  - No overhead/risk
  - Salary stability?
  - Focus on patient care
  - Mentorship and time to learn
- Cons:
  - Limits to autonomy
  - Less say in growth/branding
  - Mismatch in vision/values



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## Owning a DPC

- Pros:
  - Full control: hours, pricing, services, technology, office snacks
  - Brand control
  - Income potential, equity
  - Tax benefits
- Cons:
  - Business risk/startup cost
  - Marketing, management, operational skills
  - Stress of ownership
  - So many hats to wear



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## Comparison

Topic	Employed	Owner
Autonomy	✅ Limited	✅ Full
Risk	✅ Low	🔥 High
Learning curve	📖 Guided	🔥 Trial by fire
Income potential	💰 Fixed	📊 Variable
Work-life balance	👤 Depends	🎯 Unpredictable



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## What I Wish I Knew...

- Timeline to sustainability / paycheck
- Marketing never stops
- When to hire? Who?
- Managing mental load/ multiple hats



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## Keys to Success

- Know your personality and goals
- Vet the employer / owners
  - Longterm goals?
- Have a clear mission and boundaries
- Community resources



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## How to Decide Which Path Is Right for You

- Do you want to run a business or focus on patient care?
- Are you risk tolerant?
- Timeline? Moonlighting vs savings vs startup loans?
- Prefer creative control?
- Prefer structure?
- Prior experiences?
  
- ***What is your why?***



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## Takeaway

- Both paths honor the same mission: ***patient-first care!***
- Choose the one that aligns with your strengths and season of life



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*Live Content Slide*

*When playing as a slideshow, this slide will display live content*

## Social Q&A for Employed vs Owning in DPC



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# QUESTIONS?

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