

2022 DIRECT PRIMARY CARE

Overview

This brief presents the key findings from the 2022 Direct Primary Care (DPC) Study. The primary purpose of this study was to better understand respondents' satisfaction, practice characteristics, and attitudes toward the DPC practice model.

Key Findings

DPC Practice Characteristics and patient Panel

- Most of the respondents described their DPC practices as a full DPC (90%), which is higher than previous years (84% in 2019 and 80% in 2018).
- A small percentage of DPC practices (8%) still incorporate a fee-for-service billing to a third-party which is typically a separate panel. This number of 8% has dropped significantly from 14% in 2019.
- The average current patient panel size is 413 patients.
- When looking at the age categories represented in DPC's patient panel, two-thirds are between ages 19 to 64 (68%) while the remaining are less than 18 years old (15%) or older than 65 (17%).
- Seven in 10 (72%) worked independently when they opened their DPC practice while 20% worked with other physicians and 8% had no role in the opening.
- The primary driver of opening a DPC practice was the potential to provide better care (96%).
- The two major concerns of opening a DPC practice were capital/cash flow (59%) and membership recruitment (54%).

Pricing and Fee

- Monthly membership fees were in the range of \$20 to \$49 for children and \$50 to \$100 for adults (65 years or younger). Monthly membership fees for families were \$100 or higher.
- Over half (59%) charge an enrollment fee and 7% charge per visit fee.

Procedures and Services Provided

- The three most popular procedures provided in DPC practices are EKG (88%), biopsy and excisions (75%), and cryosurgery (73%).
- Most DPC practices provide the following services as part of the membership fee: same day appointments (99%), phone/text/consults (99%), and telemedicine (99%).

Patient Encounters

- Most patient encounters are via phone or text (41 per week). This is followed by patients seen in the office setting (27 per week).

- The vast majority of DPC practices have implemented a patient communication platform (80%) and EMR (75%).
- Three-fourths of DPC patients (74%) have access to their electronic health records via the patient portal.

Employer Engagement

- Two-thirds of DPC practices (65%) participate in signed or formal employer-based contracts.
- Most contracts offer the same bundle of services (73%) while one-fourth (26%) customize their contracts based on the employers' needs.
- Two in 10 (21%) employers require data as part of the contract, which is down from 32% in 2019.

Perceptions of DPC

- Nearly nine in 10 (87%) indicated that utilization rates of preventative care will increase as a result of practicing as a DPC in comparison to FFS.
- In contrast, most respondents believe that utilization rates will decrease for urgent care (95%) emergency care (95%), and hospitalization (91%) as result of practicing as a DPC versus FFS.
- Many indicated their patients are more satisfied about the medical care they are receiving under the DPC model in comparison to FFS patients.
- Most respondents indicated that practicing in a DPC model has had a positive impact on practicing medicine. For instance, virtually all respondents said the following factors have improved to the better: their overall satisfaction level (personal and professional) (99%), the ability to practice medicine (99%), the quality of care provided to patients (98%), and the relationship with patients (98%).

Burnout and Practice Satisfaction

- Respondents working in a DPC practice were more likely to enjoy their work and have no symptoms of burnout (54%) than those not practicing in a DPC practice (14%).
- Nearly all respondents working in a DPC practice (97%) indicated they were satisfied with their overall practice, which is significantly higher than those not practicing in a DPC practice (63%).

DPC Familiarity and Interest

- Among those who are not currently practicing in a DPC practice, four in 10 (38%) are familiar with the DPC model and not interested in transforming to a DPC practice.
- One-third (32%) are familiar with the DPC model but are still learning about it.

About the American Academy of Family Physicians

The Direct Primary Care (DPC) Study has been conducted in one form or another, in 2018, 2019 and 2022. The 2022 DPC survey was emailed to the following two audiences: 1) family physicians who are practicing in a DPC practice or interested in transforming to a DPC practice and 2) a random sample of AAFP members. A total of 492 surveys were received and 269 (55%) were currently practicing in a DPC practice.