



Scope of Practice Kit: Primary Care Is...

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- ... care provided by physicians specifically trained for and skilled in comprehensive first contact and continuing care for persons with any undiagnosed sign, symptom, or health concern – not limited by problem origin (biological, behavioral, or social), organ system, or diagnosis.
- ...includes the primary care physicians, other physicians who include some primary care services in their practices, and some non-physician providers. However, the most important person in the definition of primary care is the **Patient**.
- ... includes health promotion, disease prevention, health maintenance, counseling, patient education, diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses in a variety of health care settings (e.g., office, inpatient, critical care, long-term care, home care, day care, etc.).
- ... performed and managed by a **personal physician** often collaborating with other health professionals, and utilizing consultation or referral as appropriate.
- ... provides patient advocacy in the health care system to accomplish cost-effective care by coordination of health care services.
- ... promotes effective communication with patients and encourages the role of the patient as a partner in health care.

A Primary Care Physician...

- ... is a generalist physician who provides definitive care to the undifferentiated patient at the point of first contact and takes continuing responsibility for providing the patient's care. Such a physician must be specifically trained to provide primary care services.
- ... devotes the majority of his or her practice to providing primary care services to a defined population of patients.
- ... serves as the entry point for substantially all of the patient's medical and health care needs - not limited by problem origin, organ system, or diagnosis.
- ...is an advocate for the patient in coordinating the use of the entire health care system to benefit the patient.

Most importantly, a Primary Care Physician refers ONLY to a doctor of medicine (M.D.) or osteopathy (D.O).