



## IMPORTANCE OF A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

**A primary care provider, or PCP, serves a vital role in your overall health and wellness, acting as the leader of your care and providing you a medical home.**

### **Personalized Care**

A primary care provider (PCP) serves as the primary link to your healthcare resources. Working with a dedicated PCP enables you to establish a relationship with one provider so he/she can become familiar with you, your past medical history and your current health issues. In addition to managing physical health concerns, your PCP can diagnose and treat both mental health and behavioral health issues as well. The personal relationship you build with your PCP is an investment in your well-being and provides greater access to individualized care.

### **Coordinated Care**

A PCP also manages your overall health by working collaboratively with specialists. Your PCP acts as your healthcare quarterback, reviewing all components of your health and ensuring that all recommendations work together to give you the best outcomes possible.

### **Preventive Care**

Regular visits to your PCP, coupled with their knowledge of your past medical history, can help you get the appropriate preventive screenings on schedule. Staying up-to-date with the recommended screenings increases the likelihood of detecting a serious illness early, which ultimately gives you the best chance for a positive outcome.

For assistance with a diagnosis, or to work on a health goal, contact **ConnectCare3** by calling **877-223-2350** or by emailing [info@connectcare3.com](mailto:info@connectcare3.com).



## Tips for Choosing a Primary Care Provider

A good relationship with a primary care provider can help you get the care and support you need. Take your time in choosing a provider to ensure the provider is a good fit. Here are some tips for choosing a primary care provider.

- **Check your insurance carrier website for participating providers.** Be sure to confirm a provider's participation prior to scheduling your first appointment.
- **Consider your health needs.** If you have chronic conditions or a family history of a disease, search for a physician who specializes in that area. Do you want someone that specializes in internal medicine or family practice? Would there be a benefit to seeing an MD or a DO? Do you need a physician or would you be comfortable with an extender like a PA-C or CRNP?
- **Check office hours and location.** If the hours and location aren't convenient, you may avoid going. What days and times does the provider see patients? Does the office have after hours support?
- **Research the provider.** Provider bios, photos, and videos can often be found on practice or hospital websites. Look at their education and training, and any special interests they may have.
- **Get a sense for the provider's personality.** Will you feel comfortable taking their advice? Will they respect your feedback? Ask if the provider would be open to a brief meeting to give you the chance to get to know him or her first.
- **Ask family and friends.** There is currently no quality ranking system for primary care providers so asking for referrals is a great way to identify a primary care provider that might be a good fit.
- **Call the practice to get a feel for their system.** Is the staff attentive and organized? Are phones answered in a reasonable amount of time?

## TYPES OF PROVIDERS

### Primary Care Physician

Both Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) undergo four years of medical school followed by a residency, often either in family medicine or internal medicine. Previously, osteopathic medicine programs were believed to have a greater emphasis on wellness and prevention; however, MDs have started to embrace this concept. Both MDs and DOs can obtain their board certification and can work in all specialties and sub-specialties of medicine.

### Physician's Assistant

A certified physician's assistant (PA-C) is a nationally certified and state-licensed medical professional that can practice autonomously or in a collaborative relationship with other members of a patient's healthcare team. They can diagnose and treat conditions, and can prescribe medications.

### Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner

A nurse practitioner (CRNP) is a registered nurse (RN) who has advanced education and clinical training in a health care specialty area. Most nurse practitioners are also nationally certified in their specialty area. They can diagnose and treat conditions, and can prescribe medications.

It will ultimately be up to you as the patient to decide whether or not you feel comfortable seeing a PA-C/ CRNP or if you would prefer to see a physician. Recent research has shown that the quality of care provided by PA-Cs and CRNPs has no statistically significant difference compared to primary care medical doctors. In fact, PA-Cs and CRNPs were both shown to provide more health education. It is important to point out that both PA-Cs and CRNPs are trained to know when something is beyond their ability or understanding and a physician consultation is needed.