Frequently Asked Questions

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ABOUT DIRECT PRIMARY CARE

What is the Direct Primary Care pilot program?

Direct Primary Care is a pilot primary care practice that promotes increased access to services. Participants receive 24/7 access to providers through a combination of longer in-person appointment times, video visits, MyChart messages and after-hours phone calls. Employees and their adult dependents (age 18 years or older) who elect an Employer Health Program (EHP) insurance plan may elect to participate in Direct Primary Care for benefit year 2019. "Space is limited for this pilot as the Direct Primary Care practice can see only 1,600 participants in calendar year 2019.

Participants experience no additional costs to their insurance plan, and do not incur copayments or out-of-pocket costs for the first eight office or video visits during calendar year 2019. The practice will be located on the Howard County General Hospital campus starting January 2019. The Direct Primary Care practice offers virtual services such as e-consultations and video visits to allow participants to access their Direct Primary Care providers when and where they need them. Appointment times average 30 minutes or more to allow the provider more time to get to know each individual’s health care needs. Patients can also connect with their provider after hours through phone calls and MyChart messages. When a specialist is needed, Direct Primary Care providers can assist in arranging referral visits.
What are the main benefits of Direct Primary Care?

Individuals who elect to participate in Direct Primary Care will receive a package of primary care services. What makes Direct Primary Care different is accessibility to your provider.

The program offers patients 24/7 access to Direct Primary Care providers through a combination of office visits and electronic communication options, such as MyChart messages, phone calls and video visits. Patients also receive longer appointment times with their provider (30 minutes or more), which can help promote more time for relationship building that could lead to more personalized, coordinated and integrated care.

Who is eligible to enroll in the pilot?

All Johns Hopkins Health System (JHHS) employees and adult dependents (age 18 years or older) who elect an EHP insurance plan are eligible to enroll in the pilot. JHHS employers offering this program to employees include:

- Howard County General Hospital
- Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center
- Johns Hopkins Community Physicians
- Johns Hopkins HealthCare
- Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation (e.g., central support, such as billing, administrative services, etc.)
- Johns Hopkins Home Care Group
- The Johns Hopkins Hospital
- Johns Hopkins Medicine International
- Sibley Memorial Hospital
- Suburban Hospital

Where will Direct Primary Care services be offered?

The Direct Primary Care practice will be located on the Howard County General Hospital medical campus in the Medical Arts Building: 11085 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 103, Columbia, MD 21044. The practice will open in January 2019.

How do I enroll in Direct Primary Care?

Johns Hopkins Health System employees and their adult dependents can enroll in Direct Primary Care during the benefits open enrollment period (when you elect your insurance and employer-sponsored benefits once a year). Below are the dates for the benefits year 2019 open enrollment period.

- Oct. 8–26: Sibley Memorial Hospital
- Oct. 15–31: The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Johns Hopkins HealthCare, Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation, Johns Hopkins Home Care Group, Johns Hopkins Medicine International
- Oct. 22–Nov. 7: Howard County General Hospital
- Oct. 29–Nov. 16: Suburban Hospital

As this benefit is a pilot, space is limited. The Direct Primary Care practice can enroll only 1,600 participants in 2019. Employees interested in pilot can elect Direct Primary Care during the open enrollment period. Direct Primary Care will take into account the open enrollment waves to ensure that employees across the health system have an opportunity to enroll in the benefit.

To be eligible for Direct Primary Care, you must be age 18 years or older and select one of the Employer Health Program (EHP) insurance plans.

To enroll:

1. Visit the Johns Hopkins Health System open enrollment website.
2. Choose an EHP insurance plan.
3. Select a primary care provider. This individual will be your alternate provider should Direct Primary Care exceed its enrollee numbers.*
4. Elect to participate in Direct Primary Care when prompted.*

*Space is limited. Since Direct Primary Care can see only 1,600 participants, you will be notified after open enrollment closes whether you will participate in the pilot. If not, you will automatically receive the primary care provider selected in step 3.

INDIVIDUALS COVERED

Do I have to be an EHP member to enroll in Direct Primary Care?

Yes. You must select one of the EHP plans, either EPO or PPO, to enroll in Direct Primary Care.
Can my dependent (e.g., spouse, partner or child) enroll in Direct Primary Care?

Any Johns Hopkins Health System employee or adult dependent who is age 18 years or older and enrolled in an EHP insurance plan can participate in Direct Primary Care. This includes Johns Hopkins Health System employees, spouse/partner or child as long as the above requirements are met.

Can my kids see a Direct Primary Care provider too?

The Direct Primary Care pilot program will provide adult-only services for 2019. Direct Primary Care does not provide pediatric services. If your child is age 18 years or older and covered under your EHP insurance plan, he or she is eligible to enroll in the pilot.

I don’t work at Howard County General Hospital. Can I enroll in the pilot?

Yes. The pilot is not limited to any one Johns Hopkins Health System employer. All health system employees and their dependents (age 18 years or older) who elect an EHP insurance plan are eligible to enroll in the pilot.

Will the Direct Primary Care providers also see patients outside their patient panel?

No. The two Direct Primary Care providers will only see patients enrolled in the Direct Primary Care benefit. Each provider will see up to 800 enrollees, for a total of 1,600 enrollees in the benefit.

SERVICES COVERED

What specific services are covered under Direct Primary Care?

- Office visits
- Annual physical
- Point-of-care tests (e.g., pregnancy, urine, flu, strep)
- Telemedicine (e.g., e-visits, video visits)
- Prescriptions and refills
- Review of other provider consults and tests

Can I see a specialist without a referral?

Yes, as described by your EHP insurance plan, you may continue to see a specialist without a referral. It is highly encouraged that you speak to your Direct Primary Care provider, even if by email, before you see a specialist so he/she is able to comprehensively manage your care and speak to the specialist, if needed.

Will the Direct Primary Care practice location have radiology (e.g., X-ray)?

The Direct Primary Care practice will not have radiology services available on-site. These services are still covered according to your EHP insurance plan; they just cannot be performed by your Direct Primary Care provider and are not included in the first eight visits (in person or video). Should you need these services, your Direct Primary Care provider can direct you to radiology services according to your health care needs.

Will gynecological services be provided?

Gynecological services are not included in the Direct Primary Care package of services. However, these services are still covered according to your EHP insurance plan. Should the need arise, your Direct Primary Care provider can direct you to gynecological services according to your health care needs.

Why are pediatrics not covered under the Direct Primary Care pilot? That is what I really need!

We hear you—we are looking into offering pediatric options in the future. In the meantime, your child’s health care will continue to be covered according to your EHP insurance plan.
What if I am out of state or traveling when I need my provider?

If the issue does not require a physical visit, consider calling or messaging your Direct Primary Care provider. However, if you need to see a provider in person and elect to see a provider in your vicinity, your EHP insurance plan will determine the cost of copayments, coinsurance and deductible. (Note: This is true regardless of your enrollment in Direct Primary Care.)

COST OF CARE

Is it true that I pay the same amount as an EHP member, whether I choose to enroll in Direct Primary Care or not?

Correct. There is no additional cost for the member to enroll in Direct Primary Care. In fact, as a participant in Direct Primary Care, you get your first eight visits (in person or video) to your Direct Primary Care provider for free. No copayments or out-of-pocket costs for all services included in the package!

Wait, so I don’t pay any additional costs if I choose the EHP family plan, plus enroll in Direct Primary Care for myself?

Correct. There is no additional cost to enroll in Direct Primary Care.

Will there be any hidden fees or out-of-pocket costs that I should be aware of?

Direct Primary Care has no fees for the employee as it is an employer-sponsored benefit. However, if you receive any services or are sent for services outside the Direct Primary Care package (e.g., lab services or specialty services), your costs will fall under the standard copayment, coinsurance and deductible as outlined by your EHP insurance plan.

If you are unable to see the provider in the office, you can call or email your provider at any time.

Will I be able to see the provider during evening hours or on the weekends?

Direct Primary Care will offer extended office hours. Office hours are being finalized and will be posted on our website at jhcp.org/DPC. We encourage you to check back soon.

Will I be able to call my provider in the middle of the night?

With Direct Primary Care, you have access to your provider 24/7. If you have a concern or acute need, you can call your provider at any time, day or night.

I feel guilty calling my provider in the middle of the night or beyond office hours. I don’t want to bother the provider.

Do not feel guilty about calling the provider when you need care! These providers chose to practice in this model. They want to address your needs when they come up, day or night.

What is the expected turnaround time for calls, emails and appointment requests?

Each provider has different preferences for communication, so we suggest speaking with your provider directly to establish a preferred mode of
communication and turnaround time that is comfortable for you both.

**Doctors are always running behind, which means I have a long wait. Will there be a wait once I arrive for my appointment?**

Direct Primary Care aims to ensure there is enough time between visits so that when you arrive on time, you are not waiting for your appointment.

**ENROLLMENT**

*I’m sold! How do I enroll in the pilot?*

Employees who are interested in Direct Primary Care can enroll during the benefits open enrollment period. Below are the dates for open enrollment.

- Oct. 8–26: Sibley Memorial Hospital
- Oct. 15–31: The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Johns Hopkins HealthCare, Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation, Johns Hopkins Home Care Group, Johns Hopkins Medicine International
- Oct. 22–Nov. 7: Howard County General Hospital
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To enroll:

1. Visit the Johns Hopkins Health System open enrollment website.
2. Choose an EHP insurance plan.
3. Select a primary care provider. This individual will be your alternate provider should Direct Primary Care exceed its enrollee numbers.*
4. Elect to participate in Direct Primary Care when prompted.*

*Space is limited. Direct Primary Care can enroll only 1,600 participants. Direct Primary Care will take into account the open enrollment waves to ensure that employees across the health system have an opportunity to enroll in the benefit.

You will be notified after open enrollment closes whether you will participate in the pilot. If not, you will automatically receive the primary care provider selected in step 3.

**Is this part of the traditional open enrollment we go through as Johns Hopkins employees?**

Yes, you will be able to select Direct Primary Care as you go through open enrollment. There will be prompts guiding you through the process. You can also access an infographic at jhcp.org/DPC that shows the steps to enroll.

**When does enrollment begin for calendar year 2019?**

Below are the dates for the benefits year 2019 open enrollment period.

- Oct. 8–26: Sibley Memorial Hospital
- Oct. 15–31: The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians,
- Johns Hopkins HealthCare, Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation, Johns Hopkins Home Care Group, Johns Hopkins Medicine International

- Oct. 22–Nov. 7: Howard County General Hospital
- Oct. 29–Nov. 16: Suburban Hospital

If you have not yet received an open enrollment date, please be sure to ask your human resources representative.

**Do I need to select a particular insurance in order to enroll in Direct Primary Care?**

To enroll in Direct Primary Care, you must select one of the Employer Health Program (EHP) plans: EPO or PPO. This pilot will not be available through other insurance plans (e.g., CareFirst or Kaiser).

**PROVIDERS**

*Can I meet or learn about the providers before I have to select one?*

Yes, information about the providers is available at jhcp.org/DPC. Providers will also be available at benefit fairs across the health system to answer questions you may have about the Direct Primary Care practice.

**How many providers can I choose between?**

The practice will have two providers.
How can I share feedback about my experience with Direct Primary Care?

Our goal is to provide all our patients with the highest quality health care combined with exceptional service. One of the best ways to do this is to ask our patients about their experience so we can identify what we are doing right and areas that may need improvement. We will provide a phone number and email for feedback before the program begins for calendar year 2019.

OTHER QUESTIONS

This sounds too good to be true. What is the catch?

There is no catch. Direct Primary Care is a different model of practicing general medicine. At Johns Hopkins, we are always looking for new ways to support our employees, and that includes offering innovative care options. Our goal is to provide you with a new program that can help you maintain your health in ways that align with your schedule and needs.

This sounds great! I'm worried that everyone will sign up for this, and then we'll be back to where we are now with providers managing too many patients.

As part of the program, we have capped the number of patients each provider can see. This ensures that our providers can maintain longer appointment times and 24/7 access. As a result, Direct Primary Care can see only 1,600 participants in 2019.

I don't have a traditional primary care physician; I just use urgent care when I need it. Why would I enroll in this program?

Have you ever visited an urgent care center and had a long wait time, or had a medical question that you looked up on the internet instead of calling your doctor because you knew you wouldn't get a prompt response? If you answered yes to one of these scenarios, this is probably the benefit for you!

Direct Primary Care provides the convenience of an urgent care setting with a personalized relationship with your primary care provider. Additionally, if you have a true need for labs or X-rays, you retain the urgent care benefit through your selected EHP insurance plan.

What if I change my mind and want to stop participating in Direct Primary Care?

If you are not satisfied with the pilot, you should communicate your desire to leave the program to one of the Direct Primary Care providers, and you can then visit another primary care provider within the EHP insurance plan you selected.

Is Direct Primary Care just another name for concierge medicine?

Direct primary care and concierge medicine are similar in the form of extended visits, 24/7 access and putting a greater focus on patients to proactively manage their health. The main differences are that concierge medicine typically includes high membership fees for the patient, bills insurance in addition to the fees and also offers amenities such as massage therapy.

CONTACT US

Visit jhcp.org/DPC to learn more about the benefit. You can also email questions about Direct Primary Care to DirectPC@jhmi.edu