October, 2017

Dear Patients,

I have dreamed of writing this letter for the past several years. As you know, I take my work very personally, and seriously- I care deeply about each of my patients. I worry about you at night, and on weekends, and yes, on vacation. I believe this personal trusting relationship allows me to provide better care to you and I treasure the unique opportunities for connection and healing that being a family doctor creates: holding your newborn in the nursery, exploring your fears, detangling the odd symptoms, and simply being there when you need me, including at the end of life. Thank you for trusting me with all of it!

But providing this level of individual attention is no longer possible in the current healthcare system that favors quantity rather quality, conformity over individuality, and check boxes rather than face to face speech and physical examination. Patient centered care has given way to “payment centered care”; I can no longer practice medicine in such an environment. I thought my options were limited to selling out by joining a soulless corporate clinic or quitting medicine entirely. Neither were appealing choices that I could live with.

I believe I have found a much better way, one that returns the emphasis and focus to the patient – doctor relationship (which I have always held is the most important thing in healing!) without bureaucratic interference. Direct Primary Care (DPC) is a new model that removes third party intrusions by replacing the costly and complex billing system with a low membership fee, just like the gym. This allows the focus to shift from billing and finance to what really matters to everyone- time together with your doctor, easy access to your doctor, and the quality of personal care you have come to expect from me. This is a revolutionary idea in today’s healthcare world, but I have always been rather a rebel which is why I have been in solo practice, against all odds, for the last 18 years!

My revolution begins January 17, 2017! I will transform my current practice with about 2000 patients to one with just 500. I will cut my ties with ALL insurance companies (yep, Medicare too!) and will work exclusively for you, my patient. With a markedly smaller patient panel, I will have the time needed to custom tailor your care. Patients will have direct access to my personal contact information, including email/video conferencing, so that I can be the doctor you always wanted in your family, on speed dial just like my kids! Appointments will be 30 to 90 minutes long, and I can even handle a lot of things without requiring an office visit since I will not be bound to insurance regulations. A 60-90 minute yearly comprehensive physical is included and strongly encouraged so that we can plan together how best to maintain/improve your health. Same day or next day appointments-done! All this for one low monthly fee, less than your cable bill or daily Dutch Bros habit.

I’m sure you will have questions, and if they are not answered by the enclosed FAQs, please call the office so we can chat. The only downside to this new adventure, is that I cannot take all of you with me. My practice will be capped at 500 patients. If you do not sign up with me before then, you will need to find a new family doctor to care for you after December 28, 2016, my last day of traditional insurance based practice. If you are ready to make this leap with me, call the office and asked to be “put on the list”! My new website will be up soon where you will be able to register directly too, and as a courtesy to my existing patients, I will be waiving the Registration Fee for you until March 1, 2017. Join the revolution in health care by throwing the government and insurance companies out of the examination room! Together we can take back the essential doctor- patient relationship and move forward with excellent patient centered health care!

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Sutcliffe, MD