Dr. Sam Heiks, M.D., introduces a new business model of direct primary care … with housecalls

Dr. Sam Heiks, M.D., has started a new practice called Creekside Family Medicine http://www.creeksidebluffton.com/, according to ICIM Member Terry Chappell, M.D., of the Celebration of Health Association http://www.healthcelebration.com/. Dr. Heiks is currently accepting new patients of all ages. He is trained as a family physician, is interested in integrative medicine and has a special interest in prevention of illness.

"I'm interested in helping people realize the healing potential of their own bodies," he said in an interview with local media. "I'm also interested in integrative medicine by combining the best modes of conventional and alternative medicine."

He said that as a family medicine physician his specialty is in learning to treat all ages of people and to learn how to coordinate their medical care. "It's very important (in family medicine practice) to develop relationships with people,"

Dr. Heiks is not a newcomer to Bluffton. He is a nephew of Dr. Chappell. His father, Jim Heiks, who is a brother of Bobbie Chappell, is a Bluffton High School and Bluffton College graduate.

Dr. Heiks graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in 2008. In July he completed his family medicine residency. He holds a bachelor's degree from Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

Before becoming a doctor, Sam was a teacher, husband, and father. In fact, his interest in medicine was first sparked working with children with severe disabilities at a special purpose school in Newton, Kansas. With an interest in medicine and a degree in History, Sam went back to school to take the science courses needed for medical school. It was during this time that Sam married his beautiful wife, Rachel, and had their first daughter. In 2004, Sam started medical school at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, in Madison, Wisconsin. In 2007, Sam and Rachel welcomed a second daughter to their family. Sam completed his internship and residency at the University of Wisconsin in the Department of Family Medicine, and during this time added a son to the ranks. In the hot summer of 2011, Sam and Rachel moved the family to Bluffton, Ohio, so that Sam could join his uncle, Dr. Chappell, in practice.
Sam is board certified in Family Medicine and is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), International College of Integrative Medicine (ICIM), and the Institute for Functional Medicine (IFM). He graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from Bethel College in Kansas. At Bethel he was a two-time NAIA All-American Scholar Athlete and captain of the men’s soccer team. He has special training in prolotherapy – a treatment to strengthen joints and ligaments – through the Hackett Hemwall Foundation. In medical school, Sam was awarded the Dr. Robert F. Schilling Scholarship and the Korbitz Endowed Scholarship. Sam has a broad range of medical interests and is particularly passionate about preventive approaches to some of the most common illnesses facing our communities, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension and dementia.

And now he is starting out his career with a fresh business model: Direct Primary Care. The following questions are designed to answer patient’s questions about this new concept:

**What is Direct Primary Care?**

Direct Primary Care is an exciting new model for delivering primary care services that results in better quality of care, improved doctor-patient relationships, and greater patient satisfaction. The concept is straightforward. The doctor contracts directly with the patient, rather than with the insurance company. The patient pays a monthly fee and receives a full range of services. Office visits are longer, often 30 minutes or 60 minutes. Pairing Direct Primary Care with high deductible insurance often results in significant savings on health care expenses for individuals, families and businesses, and is one solution to skyrocketing health insurance premiums.

Direct Primary Care practices can invest their time and resources into helping patients get better, rather than billing insurance companies, resulting in healthier patients, happier doctors and lower costs. To put the cost of the Direct Care Plan in perspective, one trip to the ER is often more than the entire yearly fee. For more information, a good resource is the Direct Primary Care Coalition website (see link below). Recently, stories about the Direct Primary Care model have appeared in *The New York Times*, CNN, and NPR radio.

**I have health insurance. Can I still see Dr. Heiks?**

Yes. Dr. Heiks provides care to people with or without health insurance. For those with insurance, he is considered an out-of-network provider and asks that visit costs be paid at the time of service. His office can provide you with a form to submit to your insurance company. The amount of reimbursement you receive from the insurance company depends on your plan's specific out of network benefits. For people with high deductibles, Dr. Heiks encourages considering the Direct Primary Care option.

**I do not have health insurance. Can I participate in Direct Primary Care?**

Yes. Direct Primary Care does not exclude people based on pre-existing health conditions or insurance coverage.
Why doesn’t Dr. Heiks just accept health insurance?
Health insurance is best utilized for catastrophic illness, not for basic health care services. Nearly 90 percent of healthcare needs in America are considered primary care or preventive health needs. A good analogy is taking care of a car. If you were required to use insurance every time you needed a basic oil change, the cost of your car’s maintenance would sharply increase due to the billing hassles, paperwork and bureaucracy involved for the mechanic to get paid. You need car insurance when you are in a car wreck. This is very similar to using health insurance to cover primary care services. The result is out-of-control health care costs that jeopardize the viability of the entire healthcare system. By focusing on quality of care rather than volume of care, Direct Primary Care results in cost reductions over the short and long term. Most importantly, it can offer savings to working families and better health outcomes.

I am a small business owner. Does the Direct Primary Care plan make sense for my employees?
Yes. In fact, this can result in significant savings to the employer, especially if the employer pairs Direct Primary Care with a higher deductible insurance plan. This may save employers anywhere from 10-40% on health care costs. Other possible benefits to employers are lower absenteeism, better employee health and greater employee satisfaction with their health care.

Does the monthly fee count toward my health insurance deductible?
Dr. Heiks is not contracting with any insurance company, so the Direct Care Plan fee will not apply towards your deductible. However, the costs of prescription medications, labs and other medical testing conducted out of the office often do apply.

Can I drop out of the Direct Primary Care plan if it is not right for me?
Yes, you may cancel your involvement at any point. However, if you wish to re-enroll, there will be a six month waiting time and a re-enrollment charge equal to two months of the Direct Primary Care Plan fee. Additionally, we cannot guarantee that there will be a space available if you choose to re-enroll, as the Direct Primary Care practice is open to a limited number of patients.

Can I be seen by Dr. Heiks if I choose not to join the Direct Primary Care plan?
Yes. You are welcome to schedule a regular office visit or checkup with Dr. Heiks regardless of participation in the Direct Primary Care plan. Dr. Heiks also performs a number of procedures. You will be billed for a regular office visit, due at the time of service. We can provide you with a form to submit to your insurance company. As Dr. Heiks is not participating in insurance networks, he is considered an out-of-network provider.

Are Medicare patients eligible for the Direct Primary Care plan services?
No. Medicare has strict rules regarding how services are billed. Dr. Heiks plans to join Medicare and accept Medicare payment hopefully in late Fall of 2012, but any patient with Medicare will not be eligible for the Direct Primary Care plan.

**Does Creekside accept third party payments?**
Creekside will accept payment from Medicare, hopefully in late fall of 2012. At this time, we do not accept Medicaid, Workers Comp, or private insurance payments.

**What if I cannot afford to participate in the monthly Direct Primary Care plan?**
Dr. Heiks is committed to providing high quality medical care to patients, regardless of income. If you have concerns about cost, please contact the office.

**Will I be able to see a doctor when Dr. Heiks is out of town?**
Yes. Dr. Chappell will cover for Dr. Heiks when he is away, with no additional fees. This coverage will apply to Dr. Chappell's Bluffton office hours. Dr. Heiks will make every available attempt to be in communication with patients as needed through use of a mobile electronic record, and nurses will be available as part of the care team as well.

**Can I check my labs through the Patient Portal?  Can I send a message to the doctor?**
Yes. This is one of the big advantages to electronic medical records—it allows you to be more involved with your health care.

**I have a chronic medical problem. Is the Creekside Direct Primary Care plan right for me?**
Oftentimes, patients with chronic medical conditions requiring frequent visits and meticulous care do very well with Direct Primary Care. There is preliminary evidence that suggests common conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol are better managed through this type of model.

**What if I have a family member in town who becomes ill and I am signed up for the Direct Primary Care plan?**
If someone is important to you, they are important to me. If you have a loved one in town in need of basic care, I am happy to offer my care as part of the Direct Care service.

**Is Direct Primary Care health insurance?**
No. Direct Primary Care is not health insurance and is not a replacement for health insurance. Dr. Heiks recommends that all patients carry at least a high deductible insurance plan for coverage in the event of catastrophic illness or other major health care expenses.

**Is Dr. Heiks a Wisconsin Badger's Football fan?**
No. While living in Madison, the Badgers and their loud fans frequently woke up Dr. Heiks’s sleeping children from their naps. However, Dr. Heiks grew up 30 minutes from Green Bay, which means he is a Packers fan to the grave.

Do you have an ill child who you would rather not bring into the clinic? What about a day over the weekend when something has come up, but the office is closed? As part of the Direct Primary Care plan, Dr. Heiks is excited to add house calls to his practice for those living in the Bluffton area. He will set aside part of his schedule each day of the work week for house calls and will be available for house calls during the weekend when he is in town. At this time, when he is away, there is not a covering physician for house calls. Dr. Heiks' schedule will be available for patients through the Patient Portal.

For a list of services covered by Direct Primary Care at Creekside Family Medicine, visit Dr. Heik’s website http://www.creeksidebluffton.com/services.html.