

# How to Interview a Physician

There are many ways to learn about a physician and their practice before you become a patient. It is absolutely acceptable to interview any care provider, especially someone who will be your primary provider. You deserve the right physician, not just any physician!

## WHO DO I TALK TO?

Office managers, practice managers, nursing managers, physician assistants, oh my! In short, you want to talk to a person who will answer your questions. Ideally, this should be a person within the practice's leadership, as they will be able to provide more reliable information. Review the physician's website, do a web search, or simply call the practice to find the right person.

## WHAT DO I SAY?

While much of this discussion is specific to your medical needs, there are some things you should know about your provider and their practice.

### *The Medical Practice*

- Who else do I need to know in your practice? (office manager, insurance manager, nurse manager)
- Who does what? (referrals, schedulers, medication refills, test results)
- What are your emergency and after-hour protocols? Is there always a physician on-call for evenings, weekends, and holidays?
- How far in advance is your next appointment for new patients?
- How far in advance is your next appointment for established patients?
- How do patients communicate with you? What is your policy on response times?



## *The Physician*

- Do you have experience with my specific medical condition?
- How do you work with other patients who have this illness?
- How do you work with other physicians in our area? Collaborative approach?
- What is your communication style?
- Are you able and willing to be my care team leader?
- Are you willing to work with my patient advocate and family support system?

### **WHEN DO I ASK?**

The best time to ask your questions is *before* you choose a care provider. Having the right information and a good relationship is going to pay off down the road. If you are already working with a provider, you can ask questions during your next appointment, electronically via your patient portal, or even ask to talk to the office/nurse manager on your way out of the office.

### **WHERE DO I COMMUNICATE?**

For most patients, the method in which they communicate with their care team has to do with ease. Do you prefer a phone call? In-person chats? The patient portal system? Whichever way you choose, make sure to document contact attempts and responses, pay attention to how long it takes to receive a response, and always say thanks.

### **WHY AM I DOING THIS?!**

It's a lot of work, yes. But remember! Planning ahead will save you time, money, and energy when you need the team to act fast. You are also building a trusting and honest relationship with your provider team, and there is nothing more powerful than that.

