



YOUR Doctor Is In!

In old movies or on television, the friendly family physician is constantly accessible. He or she can always be reached by phone and scheduling time for a patient is always the priority. In times past, doctors knew their patients by name, and more importantly, they knew their patients' families and their histories. Nowadays, unfortunately, that type of medicine seems to be practiced only on-screen.

Or is it? Dr. Laura Beaty is now providing individualized, one-on-one care to her patients by creating a boutique practice with a limited number of patients. "This is the way I want to practice medicine," says Beaty. "I want to be able to give my patients as much time as they need. I want them to be able to reach me when they have a question. I want to be able to follow their treatment and give them consistent medical care. This is medicine the old fashioned way."

Beaty, a board certified family medicine physician originally from Kentucky, started her concierge practice just a month ago in Dunwoody, and has already added over 50 patients. Previously she had been with a large medical group in Marietta for seven years. With the demands of a large practice and a multitude of patients with HMOs (Health Maintenance Organizations), she became frustrated with the type of medicine she was forced to practice. "The office had nearly 4,000 patients. I simply couldn't spend as much time with each as I felt necessary. Plus, when I was on call, I found I didn't know some patients and I was uncomfortable treating them over the phone. I knew there had to be a better way."

Beaty began thinking about the type of office she longed to have and the kind of medicine she wanted to practice. "I wanted to be able to spend more than the average fifteen minutes with each patient," she notes. "I feel it is really important that each of my patients get the time with me they need. I want to answer questions and listen to them."

This year she decided to turn her dream into a reality and opened her own practice near Northside Hospital on Mount Vernon Highway. Along with her dedicated staff, Beaty ensures that her patients are the core of her practice. By paying a program fee, her patients are guaranteed either same-day or next-day appointments, 24-hour phone access and telephone consultations, and online prescription and appointment requests. "If you'll notice," adds Beaty, "I have a small waiting room, because there simply isn't a need for a larger one. My patients do not have to wait to see me. I know they are busy and the type of practice I have allows me to be there for them when they need me."



Dr. Laura Beaty's waiting room is small because her patients don't wait to see her.

Beaty also gives her patients her cell phone number. "I want them to be able to call me when they are at the drug store trying to decide on the best type of cold medicine." She stays in touch with her clients via email. She believes that this partnership approach to medical care is not something new, but simply good medicine. "The technology with cell phones and e-mail we have today enables me to give consistent care. I want to be able to use that technology to help my patients."

Bradley Fordham, chief technology officer and executive vice president of Online Insight signed up for the practice after being introduced to the concept by another one of Beaty's patients. "The first question I asked was, 'If I don't have time to come in and see you, will you come to me?'" asked Fordham. "As soon as she said she was happy to make an office or house

call, I asked her, "Where do I sign up?"

By limiting the number of patients she treats, Beaty is able to provide individualized care, such as calling other specialists and consulting with them or going along with her patients to see specialists. "I have had a nutritionist meet with a patient here in my office and I have also accompanied a patient on her visit to a specialist. As my practice grows, I look forward to offering more of these types of services," notes Beaty. "This is just good medicine and it lets me provide my patients with the best treatment plan overall."

Beaty believes that good, consistent family medical care can alleviate some of the chronic problems prevalent in the population today. "I am seeing a lot more patients with diabetes and I think it has a lot to do with the way we eat and how we exercise," she adds. By following a select group of patients, responding to their questions and listening to their needs, Beaty feels she is back to practicing medicine the old fashioned way.

Laura Beaty, M.D. Concierge Medicine is located at 755 Mt. Vernon Road, Suite 120 in Dunwoody. For more information or to reach Laura Beaty, M.D., call 404-851-0029 or visit www.laurabeatymd.com.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK TUSZYSKI

Dr. Laura Beaty focuses on providing individualized treatment for each patient.