



August 23, 2021

Dear Patient:

To make sure you continue to receive excellent and consistent medical care, we want to make you aware of a referral dynamic occurring at local hospitals that could threaten the doctor-patient relationship we have established.

On many occasions, when our patients have gone to the hospital for problems not necessarily related to their vascular condition the hospital staff has tried to refer them to a vascular surgeon employed by the hospital. We believe this is because hospitals stand to profit significantly when patients see doctors that are hospital employees, as opposed to independent doctors, like us.

Please be aware: *You are under no obligation to see this new doctor and have the right to say you are under the care of another physician and have no intention of changing doctors. The hospital has no right to interfere with your patient choice.*

This referral practice isn't just happening at our local hospitals. All across the country, hospitals are redirecting patients away from independent doctors and to employed physicians in many cases so that the hospitals can make more money. This dynamic is harming continuity of care and undermining long-standing physician-patient relationships. This practice can also lead to increased medical costs and unnecessary and duplicative visits, tests, and procedures.

Seeing a hospital-employed physician often costs more because hospitals bill for their employed doctors' services at much higher rates and have higher overhead costs to make up for. Plus, they add facility fees, which *can increase the cost of treatment sometimes by three to ten times the physician fee schedule rate.* Hospitals also often require their employed doctors to refer patients only to other hospital-employed doctors, again, potentially leading to increased costs and a violation of your rights to choose your own provider.

So, when an employed hospital doctor tries to steer you to another employed hospital doctor, remember: You have the right to stay with the doctor with whom you have established care. Be sure your family knows this, too.

Our goal is to continue the relationship and care we have established with our patients over the years while ensuring hospitals are not unnecessarily increasing costs and interfering with patient choice. We are committed to providing you the utmost quality care. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions at 407-648-4323 or 352-241-7585

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles Thompson, Dr. Jon Wesley, Dr. Adam Levitt, Dr. Michael Muehlberger, Dr. Richard Teed and Dr. Kevin Treto