



Sound Policy. Quality Care.

November 3rd, 2014

Letters to the Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15th Street NW
Washington DC 20071

To Whom It May Concern:

Regarding your October 23rd article, "Primary Care Doctors to Patients: Don't Forget About Us."

As the primary care physician community prepares to spend \$20 million to promote the benefits of primary care, I sincerely hope they will stick to established facts and not unsubstantiated statements brought forth in your article such as that primary care is "better care at lower costs."

Diverting resources away from specialty care to benefit primary care will not solve any healthcare issue or cut costs by any discernable amount. However, the projected increased demand for specialty care through 2025 is at least as great as the increased demand for primary care services. More specialists will be needed to treat an aging population with a growing number of complex health problems.

An analysis by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) in 2010 estimated that 46,100 more primary care physicians will be needed by 2020. The same analysis demonstrated a similar shortage for specialists – 45,400. Attempts to reduce the availability of specialty services in the face of these pending shortages and increased demand for their services will undoubtedly deny lifesaving care for many Americans.

Policymakers should, therefore, think carefully before adopting measures that divide the house of medicine.

Sincerely,

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