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# HICKORY MEDICAL

DIRECT PRIMARY CARE, LLC

As we prepare for both the busyness and the spirit of the holiday season ahead of us, there will be a number of changes coming to Hickory. Dr. Ryan Kauffman will be stepping back as a physician at Hickory in the coming months and Marie Barth will be taking over both management and ownership of the practice along with her husband Steve Barth. While Ryan and I (Rudi) will remain in a support role as we are needed into next year and possibly beyond, our goal will be to support Hickory as we look to continue our work in other ways. Beginning on January 1, when Ryan's Medicare and Medicaid eligibility renews, he will no longer be regularly caring for patients at Hickory and Marie will be taking over as the sole provider at Hickory.

The motivation for this change is complex. First, Ryan and Marie have found Hickory to be a rewarding experience. In conversation, it became clear that Marie and Steve had both the energy and the vision to develop Hickory in some new and exciting ways even as Ryan and I were beginning to feel a heaviness to our work. The truth is that the stresses of starting Hickory and transitioning it to this new phase has taken a lot of energy and this opportunity came just as Ryan was eligible to return to Medicare and Medicaid as a provider. The timing coupled with the angst and distrust we have seen growing around all things related to COVID, the changing needs of our families, and the stresses and always-on-call nature of Hickory all played a part in the decision. With friends like Marie and Steve in a position to carry on Hickory and allow us space to seek other options, the timing and the opportunity seemed too good to pass up. We are truly excited that the transition to new ownership and management will allow Hickory to serve you and our community well into the future. Official notice for patients of Ryan will be sent by mail in the coming days along with a more personal note.

To the more exciting news, in large part Hickory will remain the same. Its mission, the nurses, and Marie... all will remain and continue caring for you and our community. We are now working to ensure that we have the medical staff and support in place to allow Hickory to serve you well into the future. At this time, we can say that no prices will go up during the transition and there will be a decrease for those who had previously been a patient of Ryan's. There will also be some minor changes to hours and to how Hickory handles after-hours call. We will have a complete and detailed update about these changes at the beginning of December.

As always, your thoughts, comments, and insights are welcome. You can reach me anytime by email (by simply replying to this email) or during the days by phone at 937-404-2489. It has been a great adventure to be part of Hickory's first chapter and to serve you all. I am excited about what lies ahead.

Warm regards,

Rudi