Are employed physicians really more satisfied?
The piece titled “9 signs of a satisfied physician” (February, p. 6), which shares some of the results from a survey of 1,527 physicians by Jackson Healthcare, caught my attention. In particular, I was struck by sign No. 7, which states that physicians who were satisfied were likely to be employed and never have worked in private practice. Is it really the case?

This article ignores other studies that asked the question “Who is more satisfied, employed physicians or those in independent practice?” and came up with different answers. Here are two:

• A 2014 Medscape publication, “Employed versus Self-employed: Who is better off?,” reports results of a survey of more than 4,600 physicians that found both groups are equally satisfied (74% independent, 73% employed).

• Research done collaboratively by the American Medical Association and Rand Corporation found that independent physicians were more likely than employed physicians to be satisfied. The authors of “Factors Affecting Profession Satisfaction and Their Implications for Patient Care, Health Systems, and Health Policy” state the following in their summary: “In our sample, physicians in physician-owned practices or partnerships were more likely to be satisfied than those in other ownership models (hospital or corporate ownership).”

As an administrator and supporter of independent physician practices, I believe it’s important that this additional information on this important question is shared. Clearly, there is recent evidence of high physician satisfaction among those in independent practice. Being independent does not mean being dissatisfied, and independent practice remains a rewarding and viable option.

In addition, independent practices continue to show their remarkable value by consistently delivering care that is of higher quality and lower cost than that of larger “employed” practices.

Mark Pottenger
Administrator, Northwest Family Physicians
Crystal

We need more articles like this one. Until you confront it, you may not even realize there is a deductible wall keeping people from accessing even the most rudimentary health care.

Deborah Mathiowetz
Eagan

Fair take on single-payer
Thanks for the very good article on single-payer (“Single-payer health care,” January 2015, p. 16). Kim Kiser presented all sides honestly and with good material. The conversation goes on!

Chris Reif, MD
Minneapolis

Article brought hidden costs to light
Thank you for the excellent article on high-deductible health plans “Hidden costs,” January p. 22).

I am one of those who has what most would consider to be excellent insurance. But that really does not matter because if I use it, the deductible will break me. I was scheduled for surgery last December, after I had met my deductible for the year in manageable increments. For reasons beyond my control, I was not able to have the procedure then. I will now have it in February. My deductible has more than doubled for 2015, and no portion of it has yet been met. I have no idea how I will pay this bill.

Deborah Mathiowetz
Eagan

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