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MD2's new offices on Kirby Drive



FOUNDERS OF CONCIERGE MEDICINE OPEN RIVER OAKS PRACTICE WHERE DOCTORS SPEND UNIMAGINED TIME WITH EACH PATIENT

The finest and most exacting concierge medical care has finally arrived in Houston, with two of the city's leading physicians helming the practice.

If time is money, then the value of this investment is unparalleled. Unlimited time and uninterrupted focus on each patient are the calling cards that place MD2 (pronounced MD squared) in the upper stratum compared to many physician practices, which can find doctors burdened with thousands of patients. "I would say that we are the most powerful internal medicine network in the country, if not the world," says MD2 CEO Peter Hoedemaker, who was in from the firm's headquarters in Seattle to discuss the new River Oaks clinic.

As is standard in MD2's medical centers across the country, two doctors operate the Houston clinic. Internist Dr. Karen Baerenstecher and cardiologist and internist Dr. Harold Condara Jr. will take care of no more than 50 families each at their new office/clinic at 2001 Kirby Drive in River Oaks. With such a limited number of patients, the doctors can take calls at any time, schedule appointments around patients' schedules, conduct all manner of tests on site, and spend unimagined time with each patient. Their cellphones are available 24/7.



Dr. Karen Baerenstecher

Dr. Harold Condara Jr.

If an MD2 patient is referred to a specialist, the doctor can accompany them to the appointment, help explain test results, and provide moral support.

The nationwide network of distinguished doctors was established in Seattle in 1996 as the pioneering concierge medical practice by Dr. Howard Maron, who was once team doctor for the former Seattle Supersonics. Houston becomes the 19th MD2 practice in the country and the third in Texas. Dallas has had an office for a decade, while Austin's has been around for two years, with a second Austin office later this year due to high demand.

"All of our doctors are absolutely passionate about medicine," Hoedemaker says. "They went into medicine with medicine as the ideal. They really wanted to be Marcus Welby. They all love patient care." Condara agrees, adding that he had thought he was going to be a family practice physician. But then cardiology captured his imagination. "I like the procedures and the going and blowing of cardiology, but I always found that my favorite thing other than doing procedures was getting to know my families and taking care of them," he says. That wasn't an easy task with a patient count that at any given time numbered from 3,500 to 4,000.

Baerenstecher was already preparing for a concierge medicine post when she was approached by MD2. All participating doctors are recommended by physicians who are already in the system, guaranteeing the highest level of distinction. "I quickly saw the difference between my

colleagues who were taking care of 500 patients in one concierge model versus me being able to take care of 50 families," she says. "The time difference that I have with my families is significant. You have the time to give your full attention to your patients. And that's what I want: to be able to give the best quality of medical care that I can. And it takes time."

The practice is particularly beneficial for those who enjoy second homes and travel frequently, often internationally. MD2 members have access to participating physicians across the country. If members are in a location without an office, member physicians with personal knowledge of experts and specialists across the globe can make the needed referrals. MD2 prepares medical travel kits for its patients and has connections with pharmacies around the world. The membership also includes medical jet evacuation service.

The fee is \$24,000 annually for the first family member, with an additional \$12,000 for a spouse. While MD2 does not offer pediatric care, adult children aged out of pediatrics up to age 26 can be included for an additional \$4,000 per year. From age 27 to 36, adult children can be included for \$12,000 annually. The retainers are billed monthly. Insurance and Medicare are not accepted but are necessary for procedures that are out of the scope of the MD2 clinic. MD2, 2001 Kirby Dr., md2.com. Shelby Hodge



Martha Turner

Sotheby's INTERNATIONAL REALTY

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