



Welcome To The Healthcare Consumer Field Guide Blog!

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Welcome to the Healthcare Consumer Field Guide, the blog and newsroom for Direct Patient Care St. Louis, a direct primary care (DPC) medical practice in St. Louis dedicated to providing patients a simple, value-filled, and inexpensive alternative to today's complicated and expensive insurance-based healthcare.

So maybe you're asking 'Just what is a field guide?' According to [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com), the noun 'field guide' originally meant a portable, illustrated book to help identify birds, plants, rocks, etc. But Google the term 'field guide' today, and you will find field guides for almost everything. In fact, [biologist Jonathan Eisen](#) started collecting field guides as a child, and now he has he has guides to birds, forests, trains, mushrooms, butterflies, insects and space.

**Field guides are great because they are like
"taking something that is in the ivory tower
and giving it to everyone," Eisen says.**

So these days any how-to book, instruction booklet, manual, reference book, or roadmap could be called a Field Guide.

A Road Map

We provide our member patients with 24/7 access to their doctor, prescriptions at wholesale cost, and negotiated cash-pay discounts for labs, X-rays, and medical testing. But sometimes that's not enough.

Our blog's tagline is 'Helping you navigate our ailing healthcare system.' It speaks clearly of our desire to help simplify the obstacles of prior authorizations, specialist referrals, and other complex rules -- roadblocks if you will -- that insurance companies have created over the years.

We explain how you can reroute yourself and your family around these roadblocks so that you will be able to reach your destination faster and easier -- finally getting better healthcare for a lot less money.

Simplify

While reading [Christine Whitemore](#) I was reminded of the idea of K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple, Stupid). And her simplify sign reminds me that patients can't help but get lost in the midst of insurance rules and capricious denials of service. So when patients don't know how to get what their doctor says they need, I need to remember to clearly explain how, in simple terms -- to always keep it simple.

And it was this notion of 'Simplify' that led me to launch this blog -- how to simplify the medical experience for patients, how to make sense of a complex system, how to make finding relevant information easier, and how to prevent wearing out the patient who otherwise would have to be asking friends or searching online for answers.

Here are the 8 general categories this blog will address

1. Obscene Prescription Prices
2. Outrageous Lab Bills
3. Unbelievable ER bills, like the \$12,000 bill a woman received for a 2-hour ER visit for a bee sting.
4. How to navigate medical debt, for those who are not members and haven't benefitted from our discounts.
5. What you should know – and why should you care about -- the many health care changes taking place both nationally and in Missouri, such as the 116-bed Missouri hospital set to close next month.
6. Should you call your doctor, make an appointment to be seen in the office, go to an urgent care, or head straight to the nearest ER? We'll tell you what medical questions and problems are appropriate for each of these.
7. Direct to Consumer (DTC) Lab Tests are growing in number by leaps and bounds, but they raise questions among both patients and physicians alike. What you should know about DTC tests, such as 23andMe or other genetic 'ancestry' tests.
8. And, of course, answering readers' questions about medicine and healthcare.

Dr. Hicks adds:

In case it isn't obvious, you will be exposed to my views. You are more than welcome to respond, add comments & suggestions, and even disagree. I ask that we keep our comments relevant to the conversations taking place here so that we can maintain respect for all those involved and add value and depth to the discussion.

I moderate comments before they are published and will not publish any comments that are offensive, disrespectful or irrelevant. That means that if you simply come by to advertise your irrelevant website [often considered SPAM], then your comment will be deleted. However, if you truly want to add to the conversation and engage, then I welcome your perspective.

Oh, and please don't post any private information since this is a public forum. And if you have a question or complaint about your membership, use your special phone number to text me or email me, as usual.

You are encouraged to visit the [Direct Patient Care St. Louis](#) website and learn about us, what we offer and who we are. And, do feel free to contact us for more information!

Also, please come back often to engage in discussion around the notion of 'simplifying healthcare,' which I believe is becoming more important than ever.

Thank you for reading, visiting, and helping build a simpler healthcare system that is focused on what's truly important – *you, the patient.*

Synonyms for the Word 'AILING', as in ailing healthcare

Infected	Failing
Feeble	Decrepit
Ailing	Impaired
Diseased	Sickly
Unhealthy	Deranged
Malignant	Insane
Broken	Fragile
Disabled	Flawed
Debilitated	Anemic
Incompetent	Lame
Decrepit	Unstable