

# What is Family Medicine?

**In communities with increased emphasis on primary care, people are healthier and costs are lower.**

**Just the Facts!**  
Studies show that access to primary care through family physicians is associated with:

- Improved health outcomes
- Lower mortality rates
- Reduced ER visits
- Decreased rates of preventable hospital admissions
- Less invasive, lower cost care
- Higher patient satisfaction

## What is Family Medicine?

- Family medicine provides the patient a patient-centered, physician-directed medical home with comprehensive, compassionate and personal healthcare.
- Family medicine is a medical specialty solidly grounded in science and technology; family physicians provide scientific, evidence-based and patient-centered care.
- New family physicians must complete at least three years of training after medical school in an accredited family medicine residency.
- After residency, the family physician must pass a comprehensive exam to become board-certified by the American Board of Family Medicine.
- In order to maintain board-certification, family physicians must complete at least 150 hours of continuing medical education every three years, pass a re-certification exam every seven to ten years and demonstrate continued competencies annually. Family physicians are career-long learners continuously updating themselves on advances and developments in medicine.

## What do Family Physicians do?

- Family physicians provide patients with a personal medical home – building relationships with patients, listening, taking time to explain and effectively coordinating overall care.
- Family physicians are the primary providers of care for Medicare and Medicaid patients. Of people age 65 and older who reported an individual provider as their usual source of healthcare, 60 percent identified a family physician or general practitioner as their provider. Approximately, 76.9 percent of family physicians in the United States still treat Medicaid patients.
- Family physicians provide care for people of both genders and all ages.
- Family physicians help patients navigate the healthcare system by humanizing medicine.
- Family physicians make a difference in the lives of patients, their families and the community.
- Family physicians emphasize disease prevention and health maintenance in addition to treating illness.

## Why is Family Medicine Important?

Ohio needs a healthy, productive workforce. Family physicians provide high quality, cost effective care through the patient-centered medical home. Unfortunately, the United States lags behind other countries in its focus on primary care. Countries with primary care-based health systems (the kind of care provided by family physicians) have population health outcomes better than those of the United States often at lower costs.



**Provided by: Ohio Academy of Family Physicians**

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