

Announcement Of Conversion to Membership/Concierge Practice

Dear Patients,

We are announcing a change to our practice & billing model that will affect most patients. Many of you who have been in our clinic over the past few months have heard the regretful news that Dr. Howard Lang's wife experienced a stroke earlier this year. While Dr. Howard Lang was already trending toward retirement since he turned 80 years old, his wife's needs have necessitated an even greater acceleration in that direction. We have all been praying for his wife's full recovery, and at the same time we recognize that a husband is called to serve his wife at all times, in sickness and in health. After building this practice for about 50 years, he needs to spend more time at home than at the office.

In the spirit of that, Dr. Derek Lang has been handling administrative items and taking on the responsibility of caring for Dr. Howard Lang's patients in Dr. Howard's growing absence. As so many of our clients know, the style and culture of our practice is to spend time ensuring that we meet each patient at the point of need, and this can only rarely be done in short appointments. Since many of our appointments are 30-45 minutes or longer, there is no way for Dr. Derek Lang to double the amount of patients he sees in a 9 hour day in an effort to compensate for patients not seen by Dr. Howard Lang. In a similar vein, it is nearly impossible to hire a suitable new medical provider that could emulate the brand of patient care that Dr. Lang has grown to naturally deliver after so many years.

And this is why we have been soberly and prayerfully deciding on the practice conversion that will go into effect on December 1st of 2024. Everyone who comes to Lang Family Medicine knows about our billing, and the fact that we do not process insurance claims, which is a form of what is called "direct patient care," or DPC. Within this DPC sphere, there are many models. "Membership Practice" and "Concierge Practice" models are the most common.

For over 40 years, the Lang Family Medicine (LFM) brand has provided concierge level care that is patient centered and champions each patient as a partner in their medical care, wherein the patient's voice and values are afforded great worth and honor within the physician-patient relationship. LFM also has created a unique, eclectic version of integrative healthcare that includes an osteopathic, holistic, environmental, herbal, homeopathic, functional, preventative, conservative, conversational, teaching model of delivering care plans, and we also bend toward the mainstream Western pharmaceutical model when we need to.

What LFM has **not** done is to charge concierge membership prices. Historically, 90% of concierge practices charged \$600-\$3000 per year per patient (\$50-\$250 per month) just to receive their care, and those statistics are from 10 years ago (2013). Since the destructive upheavals that took place during the COVID era, with the detrimental effects on the economy, the average concierge membership is now \$1,500-\$5,000 per year. Concierge practices typically aim to shrink their patient base to about 500 patients, while charging high prices to "serve a small number of people very well." *We at LFM do **not** want to charge prices at the higher end, **nor** do we want to serve a small number of people.*

However, in order to sustain and stay in business while also growing and expanding, we must make this conversion to a DPC membership/concierge practice during this transitional time when Dr. Howard is accelerating into retirement.

For LFM, this new concierge practice model will do what very few other practices are willing to do. We are strategizing to charge the smallest annual membership fee possible and retain as many of our current patients as possible, while continuing to take on new patients for as long as possible. Our annual membership fee will be in addition to our current cost structure, with very few changes to the underlying cost structure that our current patients have come to recognize and understand. So, what will the cost structure in our new concierge practice look like? Read on to find out...

As our established patients know, our current cost structure is centered on the amount of time we spend and the complexity of the care that is delivered. The variables here create an outcome that is the opposite of a “one size fits all” product. Our care for you is individualized so specifically as to also include your values and opinions in the discernment process that leads to your treatment plan. This model leads to a “what size fits you” outcome.

We often spend a lot of time doing this, and our care plans are often complex, leading to established office visits that start at \$230 and add cost for added time spent and added complexity. Most commonly, added charges for complexity relate to labs, imaging, records, reports, letters and other forms of information management that require higher levels of critical thinking and data integration, as well as the time it takes before and after the service to coordinate the alignment of orders, faxes, referrals, procedures, emails, recommendations, and medical forms, together with the time it takes to ensure good documentation of all of the above in your chart.

Most people do not see all the steps in the process that is described here, but it is remarkably daunting at all its levels, from the more simple to the most complex. Also, you will not see a Physician Assistant or a Nurse Practitioner in our current structure. You always have the privilege of the doctor’s time, 100% focused on you. In order to continue delivering this care the way that we do, we are choosing a new cost structure that has an annual membership component and also retains the old “fee for service” component. As mentioned previously, in our new concierge practice, the old “fee for service” component will remain largely unchanged and will be billed at the time of service, exactly the same way it has been billed before. All things are subject to change in the future, but this part is not changing right now, except that discounts will be offered.

Beginning on December 1, 2024 at the time of any service scheduled or delivered, patients who intend to have office visits and/or nurse visits from LFM will be directed to our website, where they will be able to utilize “Stripe” to pay the current annual Concierge Membership fee that best fits them. If desired, this can be set up on Stripe to be paid in quarterly or monthly installments. Options will include Gold and Silver level memberships, and Adult and Youth level memberships.

There will also be Household discounts given for larger households with larger families. Additionally, a promotional “early bird” discount will benefit those patients who signed up before December 1st. And those who get their LFM concierge membership payment into stripe before November 14th will save even more.

What are the perks of being an “Adult Gold Member” at LFM? Glad you asked! For “Adult Gold Members” at LFM: The “Adult Gold Member” status at LFM is ideal for most of our patients at LFM patients who see Dr. Lang.

- Cost of “Adult Gold Member” status at LFM is \$600 annually.
 - These patients need some kind of regular visit with Dr. Lang.
 - They usually see Dr. Lang at least once per year, although some patients see Dr. Lang much more often.
 - They have access to all services at LFM, and they will receive the highest discounts.
- 25% Fullscript discount. Previously 15%, Gold Members *get 25% discount on all Fullscript orders.*
- \$215 Physician visits. Discounted \$15 below normal price for a 30-45 minute visit.
 - Extra time/complexity is still billed extra as usual.
- \$99 Nurse Visits. Usually \$110, our Gold Members get a 10% discount to a *total of \$99 for all Nurse Visits.*
- One IV push or IV drip (prices vary) will be *discounted by 25%, one-time only per year* as “Gold Member”.
- *Free shipping* for items that are mailed through the regular mail (doesn’t include priority) from our office.
- If LFM decides to close to new membership, “Gold Members” will never lose their status (even if not seen).
 - Family members of “Gold Members” will still be accepted.
- In the future, as LFM adds or changes services, special discounts may be offered.

What are the perks of being a “Adult Silver Member” at LFM? Well, for “Adult Silver Members” at LFM: The “Adult Silver Member” status at LFM is ideal for patients who do not see Dr. Lang for ongoing issues.

- Cost of “Adult Silver Member” status at LFM is \$400 annually (just over \$1 per day)
 - These patients do not need doctor visits, but they do want Dr. Lang’s style of care.
 - They only occasionally need a sick or injury visit that can be handled virtually through the nurse working with Dr. Lang. They may only need a sick Nurse visit once or twice every 2-3 years. Includes Covid.
 - When they need the virtual nurse visit, they can get it, no questions asked.
 - If any visit directly with Dr. Lang is desired or needed, these patients will upgrade to Adult Gold.
- 25% Fullscript discount. Previously 15%. Silver Members *get 25% discount on all Fullscript orders (same as Gold).*
- Nurse visits will cost *\$150 for nurse visits.* This extra cost is needed to cover the time and overhead costs.
- One IV push or IV drip (prices vary) will be *discounted by 25%, one-time only per year* as “Silver Member”.
- *No discount on shipping* for items that are mailed from our office.
- If LFM decides to close to new membership, “Silver Members” will never lose their status.
 - Family members of “Silver Members” will still be accepted.
- In the future, as LFM adds or changes services, special discounts may be offered.

What are the perks of being an “Youth Gold Member” at LFM? Glad you asked! For “Youth Gold Members” at LFM: The “Youth Gold Member” status at LFM is ideal for many of our youth patients at LFM who see Dr. Lang.

- Cost of “Youth Gold Member” status at LFM is \$600 annually.
 - These youth patients have ongoing issues and need some kind of regular visit with Dr. Lang.
 - They usually see Dr. Lang at least once per year, although some patients see Dr. Lang much more often.
 - They have access to all services at LFM, and they will receive the highest discounts.
- 25% Fullscript discount. Previously 15%, Gold Members *get 25% discount on all Fullscript orders.*
- \$215 Physician visits. Discounted \$15 below normal price for a 30-45 minute visit. (Same as Adult Gold)
 - Extra time/complexity is still billed extra as usual.
- \$99 Nurse Visits. Usually \$110, our Gold Members get a 10% discount to a *total of \$99 for all Nurse Visits.*
- One IV push or IV drip (prices vary) will be *discounted by 25%, one-time only per year* as “Gold Member”.
- *Free shipping* for items that are mailed through the regular mail (doesn’t include priority) from our office.
- If LFM decides to close membership at a later time, “Gold Members” will never lose their status.
 - Family members of “Gold Members” will still be accepted.
- In the future, as LFM adds or changes services, special discounts may be offered.

What are the perks of being a “Youth Silver Member” at LFM? Well, for “Youth Silver Members” at LFM: The “Youth Silver Member” status at LFM is ideal for youth patients who only see Dr. Lang once annually.

- Cost of “Youth Silver Member” status at LFM is \$400 annually (just over \$1 per day)
- These Youth patients only need ONE annual visit, but they do want Dr. Lang’s style of care.
- They only rarely need a sick or injury visit that can be handled virtually through the nurse working with Dr. Lang. They may only need a sick Nurse visit once or twice every 2-3 years.
 - When they need a virtual nurse visit, they can get it, no questions asked.
- If more than 1 visit directly with Dr. Lang is desired or needed, these patients will upgrade to Youth Gold.
- 25% Fullscript discount. Previously 15%. Silver Members *get 25% discount on all Fullscript orders (same as Gold).*
- Nurse visits will cost *\$150 for nurse visits.* This extra cost is needed to cover the time and overhead costs.
- One IV push or IV drip (prices vary) will be *discounted by 25%, one-time only per year* as “Silver Member”.
- *No discount on shipping* for items that are mailed from our office.
- If LFM decides to close to new membership, “Silver Members” will never lose their status.
 - Family members of “Silver Members” will still be accepted.
- In the future, as LFM adds or changes services, special discounts may be offered.

FAQ's:

1. What if I ignore this announcement and I do not do anything (no call, no appointment, no service)?
 - a. For sure, we have some patients who will not respond to us after we send out these announcements.
 - i. Some people will not receive our messages, and they will be completely unaware of changes.
 - ii. Or, they have not seen us for some time and do not plan to utilize our services again.
 - iii. Or, they have moved away and established medical care elsewhere, no longer needing us.
 - b. Regardless of cause, they'll continue to be patients here until 3 years (36 months) after their last visit.
 - i. Once they reach 36 months after their last visit, they will no longer continue to be a patient.
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2. What if I do **not** want active medical care from LFM, and I do not want to pay any membership fees at all?
 - a. That is understandable, and we totally understand.
 - i. You are **not** under any obligation to pay any membership fees at all.
 - b. Your chart will be retained within our clinic as an established patient (but not a Member) for 36 months after the date of your last visit with Dr. Lang.
 - i. This is the way it has always been done, and this will not change.
 - ii. This 36-month principle will continue to be in effect, regardless of other changes on the surface.
 - c. During this 36-month window, if you change your mind and wish to become a Member, simply call the office and then pay the "Gold or Silver Member" fee through our website, just like other members.
 - d. We have enjoyed being a part of your medical care up until now, and we will be sorry to see you go if your 36-month window elapses and you do not choose to become a "Gold or Silver Member."
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3. I definitely want to remain on the roster as a patient at LFM, but I do not need active care anytime soon in the next foreseeable few years. Do I still have to pay the "Gold or Silver Member" cost of \$600 or \$400 per year?
 - a. Yes or No, you may decide. You have time to make this decision. There is no pressure.
 - b. While we would encourage the choice of a lower cost Silver Membership, this is by no means required.
 - c. You have 36 months from the time of your last visit before your chart is put in storage and you cease to be a patient at LFM. While you will still have a chart in our storage unit, you will not be classified as a patient or as a member after those 36 months have elapsed.
 - i. If you desire medical care again from us at a later time, you would be a new patient.
 - ii. We cannot guarantee that we will be ever openly be taking new patients again.
 - iii. If we are closed to new patients, and you are wanting to come back, we will not be able to reintroduce you back into the practice again.
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4. What if I have a family living in my household, and several of us have a doctor-patient relationship at LFM? Do we all have to pay the "Gold or Silver Member" price per year, per person?
 - a. No. We care for a large number of sizable families, and we know that membership costs would add up quickly for these households. Thus, we are offering a "Household Discount" that will apply as follows:
 - i. For every member, families will decide whether they desire a Gold or Silver membership.
 - ii. Within one household/home, the first 2 Members will be charged the full Gold/Silver Member cost.
 - iii. Beyond the first 2 members, household members 3, 4, and 5 will receive the following discounts:
 1. Gold members 3-5 receive \$200 discount off of the "Gold Member" yearly fee.
 2. Silver members 3-5 receive \$100 discount off of the "Silver Member" yearly fee.

- iv. Beyond the first 5 members, household members 6-12 will receive the following discounts:
 - 1. Gold members 6-12 receive \$300 discount off of the “Gold Member” yearly fee.
 - 2. Silver members 6-12 receive \$150 discount off of the “Silver Member” yearly fee.
 - v. Beyond 12 household members, the 13th household member and beyond:
 - 1. Gold members 13+ receive \$400 discount off of the “Gold Member” yearly fee.
 - 2. Silver members 13+ receive \$200 discount off of the “Silver Member” yearly fee.
5. I pay at the front desk for my services at LFM, but I also send the itemized receipt to my private insurance company. Are the charges for being a Gold or Silver Member the sort of charges that I can attempt to forward to my insurance company?
- a. Gold or Silver Membership charges in a concierge model unfortunately do not qualify for reimbursement by insurance companies.
 - b. However, the various services provided by LFM under the concierge model can qualify for reimbursement.
 - c. As always, different services may be covered by different insurance plans, variably at best.
 - d. If LFM provides a service that is covered by your insurance company, then you can submit it for reimbursement, but it is up to your insurance plan as to what kind of reimbursement is received.
 - e. Examples of possibly reimbursable services could include but are not limited to:
 - i. Doctor visits, nurse visits, supplements, injections, IV therapy, allergy therapy, and medical reviews coordinated between Dr. Lang and the nursing staff.
 - f. We encourage you to call and ask what we have available to help offset membership charges.
6. I use a Health Savings Account (HSA) to pay for my services at LFM. Can I use my HAS (or HRA, or LPFSA) to pay the Active Member charges?
- a. The answer to this question is the same as it is for private insurance. Accounts of this nature can be used for medical goods and services, and they could include:
 - i. Health Savings Accounts (HSA).
 - ii. Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA).
 - iii. Limited Purpose Flexible Spending Account (LPFSA).
 - b. Please refer to the question above about private insurance in order to understand how this works.
 - c. As with the question above, we encourage you to call and ask what we have available to help offset membership charges under these circumstances.
7. I have been extra-blessed financially, and I have a strong feeling of desiring to support others who need the care that LFM provides. Is there a way that I can give anonymously to a scholarship fund that would subsidize membership for other patients?
- a. It is possible that we will have some patients that ask this question, or something like it. The nature of the medical care at LFM is nothing short of extra-special, above and beyond what most medical practices do.
 - b. We know that not everybody who needs us will be able to easily afford the cost of our services, so we are creating a scholarship fund that will be anonymously donated to by anyone who is willing.
 - c. Any prospective patients who would like to apply to receive a portion of this fund may do so by contacting the front desk to ask about the application process. Upper management will consider these situations on a case-by-case basis.

8. When is Dr. Howard Lang actually going to retire?
 - a. As we said before, Dr. Howard Lang is spending a lot more time these days caring for his wife.
 - b. He has already dropped down to 2 afternoons per week.
 - c. We expect that he will drop down to 1 afternoon per week soon, and then 1 afternoon every other week.
 - d. Eventually, his schedule will become intermittent and sporadic, without its previous regularity.
 - e. At some point, he will only be assisting Dr. Derek Lang to cover call during closings and vacations.
 - f. It is difficult to predict exactly how this will go, but the decrescendo is already happening rapidly.

9. As Dr. Howard Lang transitions into retirement, is Dr. Derek Lang going to begin caring for his patients?
 - a. Absolutely, yes. Many patients have already transitioned to Dr. Derek Lang.
 - b. Dr. Derek Lang is similar in many ways to Dr. Howard Lang.
 - c. For more information about this, please see the following question.

10. Why won't LFM hire a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner as a replacement for Dr. Howard Lang?
 - a. As most of our patients know, Dr. Howard Lang is a very special, unique breed of physician. He draws on nearly 60 years of experience in the medical field, beginning in 1966. He has worked in Missouri, Michigan, Colorado, West Texas (Abilene at Dyess Air Force Base), and now Tarrant County for over 47 years.
 - b. Dr. Howard Lang has invested countless hours in development of his knowledge base during the entirety of his career, and he is particularly aimed his efforts toward the root causes of disease as they are illustrated within the concepts of Environmental Medicine.
 - c. Simply, no one exists on the planet earth who can begin to fathom replacing Dr. Howard Lang.
 - d. While we considered trying to find a replacement early on in the process, it is just not possible to go through the hoops, hurdles, and loop holes that are necessary to sign on a new provider in a very short period of time. Perhaps as time goes by, a suitable partner for the practice will be presented/accepted.
 - e. For now, that project is on hold.

11. I have been a patient of Dr. Howard Lang ("Dr H"), and I don't even know Dr. Derek Lang ("Dr D") hardly at all... why should I continue with LFM after Dr. H Lang retires?
 - a. Dr. H has always been committed to helping patients with truth that connects with patients on a conservative and common-sense level. The clinic and Dr D will continue serving Dr H's patients just like it always has. LFM will maintain therapies that work well and provide access to new treatments and concepts of wellness, both alternative and mainstream, using common sense, merged with patients' values, opinions, and desires.
 - i. Of course, Dr. D was born and raised by Dr H. Sometimes they can be so similar, it's startling.
 - b. While Dr H has served on the International Board of Environmental Medicine, Dr D served for 7 years on the Board of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine. During that time, Dr D was VP, President, and Continuing Medical Education Chairman. Dr D is now serving a 2nd term on the AAEM Board.
 - c. The values espoused by Dr H are bred into Dr. D. The LFM clinic under Dr. D's leadership will continue on in the same footsteps of service and dedication to the roots of issues and meeting patients at their point of need. There's an old saying that "the apple doesn't fall far from the tree". In one sense, this could describe the fact that "Dr D the son" is not so different as a physician from "Dr H the father" and that's true.
 - i. However, from its inception under Dr H, LFM has always received its inspiration and guidance from what many refer to as the Tree of Life. Dr. H has shown over many years that he didn't fall far from

This Tree, and he takes great strides to stay close to the Tree of Life in his daily walk. Likewise, Dr. D. hasn't fallen far from the Tree of Life, either. Dr. D is passionately committed to being a "Tree hugger" in the spiritual sense. Under Dr. D, the Tree of Life will always remain at the center of LFM.

12. If I am a Silver Member, may I upgrade to a Gold Member if and when I want to?

- a. Yes, this is a simple matter of paying the additional difference in order to gain the additional benefits.

13. After I've paid to become a Gold or Silver Member, what if I change my mind and decide I do not want membership, and I want to cancel?

- a. In any system of membership such as we are engaging in here, we realize that people must be given the freedom to change their minds. This is part of life, and we totally understand.
- b. Membership can be canceled at any time, although LFM will continue to honor the term of the paid for membership. For this reason, refunds will not be given. No refunds.
 - i. Under all circumstances, LFM will also provide emergency care for 30 days after a cancellation.
- c. However, with the above said about no refunds, there will be some patients who will be paying monthly or quarterly via the stripe program.
 - i. For these patients, they will not receive refunds for monthly or quarterly payments already given.
 - ii. However, they will have the freedom to stop future monthly or quarterly payments, without obligation, no questions asked.
- d. For this reason, we encourage patients to only pay for a period of time that they know they want.
 - i. For example, if you are not sure you want a year-long concierge membership, it may be wise to schedule your payments through stripe to be monthly or quarterly.

14. What is the situation if I want to upgrade from silver level to gold level?

- a. An LFM silver member may choose to upgrade to gold if they desire to have a physician visit scheduled during business hours or through the on-call answering service on the weekend.
 - i. If they have paid the \$400 annual silver membership, they can simply pay an additional \$200.
 - ii. If they are paying a \$100 quarterly silver membership, they can simply begin paying \$150 quarterly.
 - iii. If they are paying a \$33.33 monthly silver membership, they can simply begin pay \$50 monthly.
- b. When upgrading from silver to gold, a minimum 6-month commitment will be required.
 - i. This requirement is being put into place to prevent going back and forth between silver and gold.
 - ii. If an additional annual \$200 is paid when upgrading, then the \$200 is nonrefundable.
 - iii. If an additional quarterly \$100 is paid when upgrading, then 2 quarterly payments are required.
 - iv. If a monthly payment becomes \$50 monthly, then 6 monthly payments of \$50 are required.
 - v. Each of these descriptions reflects a 6-month commitment to gold level membership.
 - vi. Following this 6-month period, a downgrade to silver can be arranged via the office manager.

15. A final word from Dr. Derek Lang

- a. I know that these words will reach many people that have spent hours talking with me and who know me well. At the same time, there are people reading this that have never met me and have no idea what level of character I may or may not possess.
- b. It is a challenging step to take... asking someone who does not know you to trust you. It might be simpler if we were talking about simply a recommendation for a restaurant to have lunch at, or if we were giving directions to a location a few miles away. But it is not that simple. We are talking about one of the most sacred relationships that exists on the planet earth... the Doctor-Patient Relationship.
- c. I cannot promise you that I will walk out my career exactly like Dr. Howard Lang. We are not exactly the same person; however, I do pledge to walk in the same integrity he has walked in. Further, I carry myself with the same spirit of teaching and patient empowerment that Dr. H carries himself with. He pours his heart, soul, mind, and strength into every medically professional interaction, and I do the same thing. We are both imbued with the ability to assist healing by the Great Physician, and we both look to Him as the One who is able to do what only He can do. We take each step with faith, hope, and our love languages.
- d. I hope that as many patients as possible will stay with Lang Family Medicine as we transition together into a new season. I am sure it will be filled with lots of challenges in a need for endurance and perseverance. Such is life, and we are prepared to steward our gifts and talents, meeting the challenges of life head on. I look forward to serving your interests, values and goals at your next appointment, at your convenience.
- e. May you be blessed abundantly, no matter where you go. Respectfully, Dr. Derek Lang.