

# WEST LAKE FAMILY PRACTICE, P.A.

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR MEDICARE PATIENTS

In brief, the intent of this letter is to inform you that we have decided to drop out of the Medicare program. Let us quickly add that, if you wish, we would be honored to continue caring for you by private contract at modest fees that we hope you'll afford. It is important to understand that private contracting with your doctor does not restrict your use of Medicare for medical care by any other physician or for medical expenses incurred outside of our office. The details on this are covered in the Frequently Asked Questions with this letter.

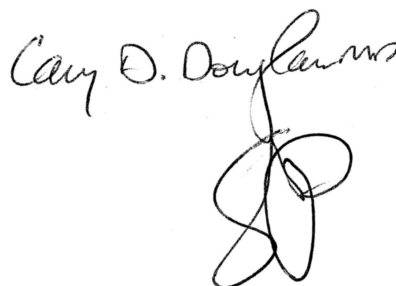
The reasons behind this change are known to many of you with whom we have spoken about this in the past. Dr. Douglass and Dr. Chen have been opted out of Medicare for a few years now. Effective August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 all providers at West Lake Family Practice will be opted out of Medicare and available for private contracting with Medicare patients. No one is forcing us to do this. Medicare has not excluded us from the program. In fact, none of our providers has actually been accepting any *new* Medicare patients for a few years now. We frequently turn away new patients with Medicare, whereupon they offer to pay cash. Unfortunately, unless a physician goes to the lengths we are all now taking (opting out of Medicare), it is fraudulent for a doctor to take cash from a Medicare patient and not bill Medicare. Opting out of the Medicare system actually frees us up to treat Medicare patients on a simple fee-for-service private contract basis. After carefully considering this and all of the recent changes and risks associated with working within the Medicare system, and after months of deliberation, we finally decided to resign from the Medicare Program.

Please forgive us for the delay in letting you know sooner. This anguishing decision was most difficult for us to even consider. But we made it our goal to do it in such a way that will allow us the opportunity to continue caring for our patients who have Medicare. We remain deeply committed to the practice of medicine at the level of which and according to the principles by which we were trained, and we are not willing to sacrifice our commitment to those principles and what it means to your care. This is the type of relationship we want to have with our patients.

We do understand that there are some who will still want to use their Medicare even for their primary care. In that instance we will kindly transfer a copy of your medical records directly to the physician of your choice, free of charge.

Thank you for your trust and consideration. Please let us know if there any questions we can assist you with. We certainly hope you will give us the opportunity to continue to care for you here at West Lake Family Practice!

Most sincerely yours,  
The physicians of West Lake Family Practice

Cary D. Douglass  


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