

# South Florida Hospital News<sup>®</sup> and HEALTHCARE REPORT

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## Local Internist Selected for National Physicians Council for Healthcare Policy

BY DANIEL CASCIATO

In December, Dr. Robert Briskin, founder of VIP Primary Care Associates, P.A., across from the Jupiter Medical Center, attended the National Physicians Council for Healthcare Policy meeting sponsored by Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX).

Dr. Briskin was invited by the Council's leadership to join the council due to his life-long commitment to improving the lives of patient and doctors. He currently serves as the only internist from Florida on the Council.

"There are certain things that make the practice of medicine very difficult for physicians right now," says Dr. Briskin. "A lot of that is due to government overreach. They want to bring down the cost of healthcare, but are imposing certain things that eat up the physician's time."

The National Physicians Council for Healthcare Policy was founded in 2014 under the leadership of Drs. Marcy Zwelling of California and John Gill of Washington, DC, under the auspices of Congressman Pete Sessions. It consults with and advises members of Congress on various healthcare issues, such as the new Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) implementation as well as private-sector modifications/alternatives to the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Dr. Briskin was invited to join because of his experience working behind the scenes on healthcare reform over the past 25 years.

"It was very inspirational to be sitting in a congressional hall with 60 doctors and several members of Congress," he says. "It was incredibly empowering to be a part of a group of healthcare leaders from all parts of the United States. Most of the 50 states were represented with people trying to find solutions for patients and physicians to



**Dr. Robert Briskin**

make the healthcare system better."

Dr. Briskin has not seen many new original ideas from Congress which would ultimately affect the total cost and quality of healthcare. There are various financing mechanisms, he notes, such as block grants to the states, high risk pools, selling insurance across state lines.

"But the devil is in the details and there are problems with virtually everything I've heard, other than HSAs, Direct Patient Contracting with physicians, Medical Homes, which have definite merit," adds Dr. Briskin, who founded the first concierge-style medical practice in 2000, one year before the arrival of MDVIP.

He adds, "I have yet to witness any meaningful, comprehensive reform proposals coming out from major medical organizations, including the FMA or the AMA. The original ideas, in my opinion, stem from the innovators in healthcare. Every idea I hear is centered on tax credits - giving credits so people can buy their own health insurance. But I have not seen any plan that would influence the price of the health insurance. Nothing makes it more affordable. Our mission is to try to come up with suggestions for Congress. It's a

process."

While the Council believes that the current healthcare system capably delivers the highest quality of care in the world, they also stress that the highest quality care is not accessible or affordable to all Americans. They believe that any reforms must focus on patient-centric care that is adequately funded, offers individual choice and direction.

"Basically, if you're rich, you can get the best care in the world," says Dr. Briskin. "The problem is for 80% of the population for whom the high cost of healthcare is an issue. The best care may not be accessible to you, especially for the lower and middle classes in our country."

One idea that Dr. Briskin sees as a valuable addition to traditional health insurance is the Healthcare Sharing Ministries Medishare program. Through these plans, faith-based organizations collect monthly dues and then distributes the money to subscribers who have medical bills to pay.

Dr. Briskin and his wife and four children recently enrolled in Liberty Healthshares, and saved about 75% over his prior BlueCross/BlueShield policy. The only real problem, according to Dr. Briskin, is that these plans are not guaranteed issues and pre-existing conditioning are grandfathered in over several years.

"Still, for about 80% of the population, I feel this is a great alternative to taking charge of your health at a reasonable cost," he says. "One of the answers to healthcare is to partner with the faith community."

For more on this story, visit <https://www.southfloridahospitalnews.com>.

For information on VIP Primary Care, visit [www.vipprimarycare.com](http://www.vipprimarycare.com). To learn more about the National Physicians Council for Healthcare Policy, visit [www.npchcp.org](http://www.npchcp.org).