# CHOOSING A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

## 5 tips to help you find the right one

A **primary care provider (PCP)** is an important health professional who sees you for most of your medical needs, routine screenings, wellness visits, and non-emergency illnesses. Finding the right one is an important first step in taking care of your health.

### 1 Identify your health needs.

- **Family medicine providers:** Care for patients of all ages for a wide range of conditions
- **Internal medicine providers**: Care for adults for a wide range of conditions
- **Pediatricians:** Care for newborns, infants, children and adolescents
- **Geriatricians:** Care for older adults with medical needs related to aging
- **Obstetricians/Gynecologists**: Care for women, particularly those of childbearing age
- In some settings, a **nurse practitioner (NP)** or **physician assistant (PA)** may also serve as PCP.



### 2 Learn who is 'in-network.'

Many health insurance plans have special rates with certain doctors, and you'll pay less for visiting these 'in-network' providers vs. 'out-of-network' ones. To find out who is in your network, contact your health insurance carrier (number can be found on the back of your insurance card).

### 3 Consider your preferences.

- How far are you willing to travel to see your provider? Is the office easy to access?
- Which days and times work best for appointments?
- What language(s) do you speak?
- Do you want to be able to talk with them over the phone and through email?

### 4 Get recommendations.

Who do your family, friends, and coworkers see? Ask the people you trust or a different provider for their recommendations. Just keep in mind that everyone is different. The right provider for someone else may not be the right fit for you.

### 5 Pay attention to the details.

When setting up a new patient appointment,

- Were the office staff friendly? Did you feel listened to and respected?
- How long did you have to wait to speak with someone?
- Did your provider have enough openings for appointments?

*Looking for more information?* www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/doctor.htm