

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Citizens' Council for Health Freedom Marks One Year of The Wedge of Health Freedom

*The Wedge Brings Patients and Doctors Together in a Third-Party-Free
Network That Restores Simplicity, Affordability and Confidentiality*

ST. PAUL, Minn.—One year ago on June 28, 2016, ***Citizens' Council for Health Freedom (CCHF, www.cchfreedom.org)*** unveiled an exciting new health freedom initiative that sought to change the landscape of health care in America—especially important as lawmakers continue to debate health reform and introduce versions of Obamacare “repeal and replace” bills.

In a health care world where patient and doctor freedom seems like one of the least important considerations for insurance companies and the government, a change is desperately needed.

Today, more than [200 practices](#) in 44 states around the country have joined ***The Wedge of Health Freedom (www.JointheWedge.com)***, which uses third-party-free direct payment to transform the entire health care system back to freedom and restore simplicity, affordability and confidentiality.

CCHF president and co-founder Twila Brase said ***The Wedge*** was born as a result of looking at the current state of health care—where high prices and government reporting are the norm; where one-size-fits-all treatments and narrow networks limit patient choices and tie doctors' hands; where intrusive questionnaires and data-sharing without consent put patients' privacy at risk; and where an impersonal bureaucratic processes and managed care controls inhibit a true doctor-patient relationship.

“The Wedge of Health Freedom is a free-trade zone for health care,” Brase said. “Wedge practices were already operating nationwide, but patients had no way of finding them, so The Wedge draws the public’s attention to this patient-centered, freedom-embracing slice of American health care. The Wedge helps make the invisible visible and brings patients and doctors back together again for patient-friendly, pocketbook-friendly and privacy-friendly care. This is the ethical way health care was and what it must become again.”

The Wedge is a nationwide movement to build public awareness, to make this attractive free-trade zone for health care visible, to legislatively defend it and to build it so large that it can never be taken away. The online center for ***The Wedge***—www.JointheWedge.com—allows

doctors to learn how they can operate a **Wedge** practice, as well as provides patients with a map of **Wedge** practices so they can find doctors who incorporate the eight **Wedge** principles:

1. Transparent and affordable pricing
2. Freedom of choice
3. True patient privacy
4. No government reporting
5. No outside interference
6. Cash-based pricing
7. A protected patient-doctor relationship
8. All patients welcome

Last year at **The Wedge** kickoff in Washington, D.C., **CCHF** welcomed two of the first doctors who joined **The Wedge** to talk about why they operate under **Wedge** principles.

“When my husband and I started our practice, we joined one HMO early on, but we found out that the insurance company was always suspicious of our motives and would try to figure out ways to not pay us, and they made us report more and more,” said Dr. Alieta Eck of New Jersey. “They and the government were like an elephant sitting on our laps, which was heavy and painful and it was hard to see our patients because there was something in between us.

“We dropped that contract two years later,” Eck continued, “and chose to work directly with our patients. So our patients pay us a fair fee, and whatever they get back from insurance is not our business. Our business is to take care of the patient and do the best we can for them. The best patient is a happy patient who listens to us, who values our opinions and does what we say and is willing to pay for our services. And if they need a specialist, I choose one that I would trust. (O)ur patients stay with us because they know I work for them. I don’t work for a hospital, I don’t work for an insurance company, and I don’t work for the government. Our medical records stay within our practice; we don’t share them with anyone unless the patient wants us to communicate with another doctor.”

Dr. Brenda Arnett of Virginia echoed Eck’s sentiments, adding that her practice of about 400 patients allows her to know that she is giving the best care possible to those who trust her as their doctor.

“During my residency and the one year I spent in a traditional, multi-specialty group practice,” Arnett said, “I became extremely frustrated with the large number of patients that I had to see per day, frustrated with the insurance intervention and life-changing decisions for patients and the poor care that often resulted. So 10 years ago, I decided to leave the traditional group practice and establish a cash-only, fee-for-service practice. (Now) I spend an hour and a half with a new patient and 45 minutes with a return patient. As a result, the patient gets better care, and ... I have made diagnoses in patients of mine that other physicians have missed. As Sir William Osler once said, ‘The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.’”

Likewise, Dr. Kim Corba appreciates the ability to offer her Allentown, Pa., patients the health freedom that *Wedge* principles encourage.

“I love practicing without the intrusion of the insurance companies,” Korba told CCHF. “Having that time to spend with the patient and establish that very special relationship with them, without having to worry about requirements of the insurance companies or the government, is extremely liberating—to feel that way and to be practicing the way it used to be 20 or 30 years ago.”

CCHF also asked other *Wedge* doctors about their greatest joy in being third-party-free. Some of their responses were:

- “More time to spend with each patient” and “personal relationship with patients”
- “Freedom to work only for the patient” and “privacy for patients”
- “Avoiding the headaches that come with the current insurance system”
- “Not wasting time on bureaucratic and expensive nonsense”
- “Ability to put patient-physician relationship front and center”
- “Being able to give patients the time that truly makes a difference. Seeing the appreciation from patients and family members. Getting mittens made by patients, baked cookies, thank you cards...”
- “I get to focus on my patients, not billing, coding and third-party payer requirements. I get extra time and flexibility to care for my patients how I see fit.”
- “Got my life back”

“Today’s health care system is filled with a maze of costly, intrusive and restrictive regulatory controls over the practice of medicine and the delivery of health care services,” Brase added. “Both patients and doctors are experiencing delays and denials. In short, the mission of medicine—taking care of patients—is being lost to the business of health care. The Wedge connects patients and doctors in a trusted, ethical, caring relationship that’s affordable.”

For more information about *CCHF*, visit www.cchffreedom.org, its [Facebook](#) page or its Twitter feed @CCHFFreedom. Also view the [media page for CCHF here](#). For more about *The Wedge of Health Freedom*, visit www.JointheWedge.com, *The Wedge* [Facebook](#) page or follow *The Wedge* on Twitter @wedgeoffreedom.

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