

# *Medical Fastpass*

**W**hen Robert Grant's concierge doctor -- a primary care physician -- referred him to a urologist, Grant was upset that he had to wait 12 weeks for an appointment.

"Isn't there a concierge option?" he asked his doctor. "I don't mind paying a little extra to get in a little sooner."

No, he was told. No such option existed for health specialists.

So Grant decided to create one.

The result is Concierge Key Health, a mobile app that provides a "fastpass" for patients willing to pay a bit more for a hassle-free patient experience. It costs \$3000 for



***Robert Grant created the Concierge Key Health mobile app as a 'fastpass' for patients willing to pay a little extra to avoid a long wait to see a health specialist.***

an individual and \$5000 for a family plan. The patient's insurance carrier pays for the visit itself.

Newport Beach, Calif.-based Concierge Key, which currently comprises 200 physicians, launched in March in Orange County, Calif.; Phoenix; and New York. Plans calls for expansion to Dallas; Denver; Seattle; Chicago; San Francisco; Washington, D.C.; and Miami throughout 2018.

"When you join, you're assigned 12 doctors in your neighborhood," Grant explains. Through the app, all of your doctors have access to your health history and insurance information. When you need to see one of the specialists, "You pick a two-hour time window and, as soon as you arrive, you're the next patient to see the doctor." That's true even if you travel to another city where Concierge Key operates. "A whole team is assigned to you when you land," Grant

says. Patients check in at a kiosk in the doctor's office, using the Concierge Key app.

Doctors only accept one Concierge Key patient in any two-hour time window, in deference to the patients already waiting to be seen.

Wait times to see a specialist in the U.S. average 24 days, according to a 2017 survey by the physician placement firm Merritt Hawkins. And the problem is only going to get worse, Grant says.

"It's been a long time since health care was about the doctor, the patient and their relationship. Fewer people are going into medicine. It's less and less fun, and I think that's endemic to a third-party system that's not customer-centric," he says. The Association of American Medical Colleges projects a shortage of potentially 100,000 doctors

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by 2030 – a circumstance that will only increase wait times.

Grant had an ace in the hole when it came to selecting physicians for Concierge Key. As chairman of growth equity firm Strathspey Crown, his investors represent a 700-member cooperative of board-certified physician specialists in a variety of specialties. When you join Concierge Key, you have access to specialists in cardiology, dentistry and oral surgery, internal medicine, gastroenterology, hematology/oncology, dermatology, plastic surgery, ophthalmology, neurology, obstetrics, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics, urology and emergency medicine. All are faculty members within their respective medical societies – doctors whom others seek out for education and training.

Concierge Key doctors are chosen by their peers. “We knew who the top leading doctors were within each specialty. They operate within an organization called the World Physicians Organization ([www.worldphysiciansorganization.com](http://www.worldphysiciansorganization.com)),” Grant says. The WPO board has 50 members, with three to five physicians representing each specialty.

“We engaged them and formed a board of regents, and they decide every doctor who’s allowed to participate in Concierge Key nationwide,” Grant says.

Concierge Key came up with the health team concept while Beta testing the app. Says Grant, “We learned from our research that patients are tired of doing a Google search and getting a whole list of doctors. So we changed completely our model to create a team where that selection is made for you.” The team approach has been very popular, he says. “Patients like the idea of their doctors being able to share info among themselves in their care continuum. And

they feel like they have a team around them. They don’t feel alone anymore.”

Grant says his firm conducted extensive demographic analyses of major metropolitan areas across the U.S. “Our sweet spot is millennials with children who make over \$150,000. They are very tech-savvy, and many haven’t chosen their doctors yet.” Grant further suggests that companies might offer Concierge Key as an employment perk.

Grant expects others to follow Concierge Key’s lead. “I fully expect competition to embrace it. I hope they do,” he says. “I think it will help change the health-care customer landscape to one that’s more customer focused and patient-centric.” He says all of the patients who have used the app to date have given it a five-star rating.

Grant envisions Concierge Key as a global platform, especially considering Strathspey Crown’s relationships with doctors all over the world. He would also like to see a shift toward preventive medicine. He envisions a future where doctors get paid not for treating you when you’re sick but for keeping you well. “That’s the bigger vision here,” he says. — ***By Eve Gumpel, California Business Journal***

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