Faces of the FMA
A special edition of Florida Medical Magazine

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- Report: Florida’s physician workforce
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Register for the 2018 Direct Primary Care Conference

Learn the right way to start or expand a DPC practice by attending the 2018 Direct Primary Care Conference Nov. 1-3 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando. Visit the Docs4PatientCare Foundation website at d4pcfoundation.org for registration information.

Direct Primary Care leader Lee Gross, M.D., works on DPC initiatives nationwide and is President of the Docs 4 Patient Care Foundation. He is shown with DPC physicians Kim Corba, M.D., and Josh Umbehr, M.D., at a healthcare ceremony in the Rose Garden of the White House.

The Pioneer

Lee Gross, M.D.

The FMA had a national expert on call during a multi-year campaign to eliminate roadblocks for Florida’s Direct Primary Care doctors. Pioneering DPC physician Lee Gross, M.D., was a key advisor to the FMA in drafting legislation establishing that DPC agreements are not insurance and therefore not subject to regulation under the Florida Insurance Code.

The Legislature finally passed the bill (HB 37) this year, easing the path for primary care doctors who want to opt out of the third-party payer system and contract directly with their patients. Dr. Gross and his practice partner, William Crouch, M.D., took that leap of faith in 2010 when they founded Epiphany Health Direct Primary Care in North Port. Few roadmaps existed then, but their practice succeeded and Dr.

Gross became one of the most influential advocates for direct primary care in America.

Shortly after HB 37 passed, Dr. Gross summarized the story behind the bill’s victory.

“As I reflect on the journey that led to passage of HB 37 in support of Direct Primary Care, I think back to a phone call that I made to my state representative when we first started exploring our practice restructuring. I explained our practice model and said that we might need a few lines of legislation that exempted us from being considered insurance.

I remember that phone call vividly. My representative was a physician at the time. He asked, ‘Who do you think might be opposed to this?’ I replied, ‘Probably the insurance lobby — oh, and maybe the hospital lobby. But that’s it.’”

He said, ‘So, besides King Kong and Godzilla, is there anyone else you want to invite to the party?’

While he didn’t agree to take up the cause, it was a first lesson in the journey that I have personally taken in learning how the legislative process functions and reinforces the amazing obstacles that a team of good people has overcome.

The FMA has been a key member of that team, fighting for physicians. There were over 170 industry registered lobbyists who opposed this bill, and the vote was nearly unanimous in favor of the bill, thanks to the heroic efforts of so many.