

Seeing the Stories Unfold

Dr. Leigh Saint-Louis provides a personal and flexible practice to the community BY KEVIN SULLIVAN

One day, a patient with diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and depression walked into a doctor's clinic in Milwaukee, Wis. Due to the limited time they had for the appointment, the doctor told the patient they could only treat one of the afflictions during that visit. The patient chose to tackle the weight issue, completely ignoring all of the other problems. For Dr. Leigh Saint-Louis, that was the moment she knew she could never practice medicine this way again.

For five years, the doctor who usually goes simply as "Dr. Leigh" has provided a private practice to about 400 patients, and she's done it her way. She charges \$79 per visit, no matter the length, the reason or the insurance that you have. With no receptionist or nurses, Saint-Louis fosters an intimate relationship with her patients. She gives out her number and her email regularly to better communicate with people she treats.

"It's one-stop shopping here with me," Saint-Louis says.

Along the way she has done side projects such as being the team leader of Occupy Medical, and as of last Halloween, Saint-Louis became the medical director of the White Bird clinic, drastically increasing her workload.

"I feel like I graduated from Occupy Medical," Saint-Louis says. "I've taken a step up to do a more overarching coverage of the drastically underserved population." Saint-Louis says that White Bird allows her to get an "eagle-eye" perspective on what works for patients as a whole.

Because of this choice in how her practice is run, she is in total control, an aspect that she enjoys. However, by running her practice in this fashion Saint-Louis also makes sacrifices in terms of income. "I make about as much as a high school math teacher, and I think that's very appropriate for our society," she says.

Saint-Louis says that she runs her practice in an intimate fashion because she likes the relationship built over time with patients. She explains that surgeons only see patients for a couple check-ups after the surgery is over, but she sees how the patients progress.

"I like seeing them come back year after year and see how the story turned out," Saint-Louis says.

Dr. Leigh says that she's wanted to treat people since she was a teenager. For her, serving the underserved has been sort of a mission. And, over the past five years, she has upheld her own standards.

"I wanted to practice medicine with integrity," Dr. Leigh says. "And I do sleep very well at night. I don't toss and turn worrying that I've missed something." ■



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