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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONCIERGE MEDICINE IN COLLIER COUNTY  
IS SUBJECT OF LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MEETING

JANUARY 16, NAPLES—As physicians move to dramatically reduce their patient load by changing to a concierge practice, move away or take early retirement, primary care in Collier County may be inaccessible to growing numbers of residents. This crisis and the growing concierge practice of physicians will be the subject of the February 19 general meeting of the League of Women Voters of Collier County to be held at 12:30 p.m. at Vineyards Community Park Center, 6231 Arbor Blvd, Naples.

“We have four fine hospitals with 600 physicians on their rolls but many of the doctors in primary care practices are unable to take new patients and some will not accept Medicare assignment or certain insurance policies,” says Chris Straton, president of the Collier League. “While slightly more than 50 percent of primary care/internal medicine practitioners are taking new patients, the first appointment might be weeks or months from contact.”

The pros and cons of concierge care will be presented by Dr. John Pierre van Dongen, M.D., who has a concierge practice in downtown Naples, and Dr. Joseph Gauta, M.D., Board Certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Concierge Care is the name given to the practice of physicians who charge a fixed fee, generally \$1500 to \$5000 annually to a select number of patients who then will get a comprehensive physical examination and a promise that the doctor will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In so doing, the physician might be able to afford to lighten his or her patient load from 3000 patients to 300. While the 300 most likely will have quality care, the remaining 2600 patients will have to select another doctor.

The public is invited to participate in a buffet luncheon at noon, preceding the program. Cost is \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members; call the League at 239-263-4656 by noon, Friday, February 16, for reservations.

For more information, visit [www.lwvcolliercounty.org](http://www.lwvcolliercounty.org).