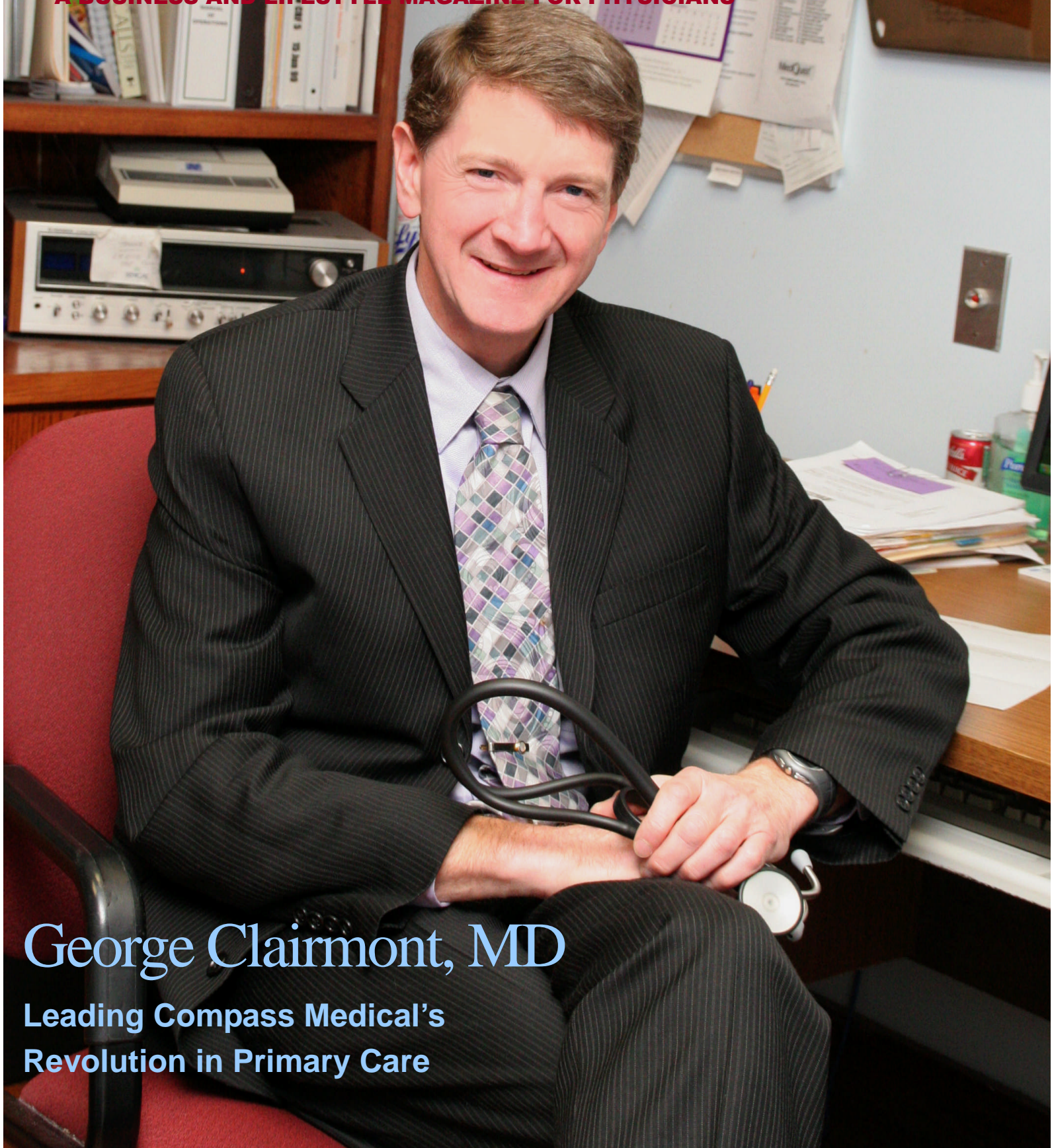


South Of Boston Edition

M.D. NEWS

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George Clairmont, MD

Leading Compass Medical's
Revolution in Primary Care

George J. Clairmont, M.D.

Brockton native leads Compass Medical P.C. to a position of regional leadership in primary care medicine

By Kathryn J. Siranosian, M.S.

Five years ago, George J. Clairmont, M.D., joined a health club and made a personal commitment to get fit. Since then, he has established a regular exercise regimen, shed forty pounds, and competed in numerous road races, including three Boston Marathons. These days, he even has his sights set on “Iron Man” triathlons.

Willpower? Sure. Persistence? Absolutely. But, for Dr. Clairmont, attributes like these are nothing new. In fact, these recent athletic accomplishments only serve to underscore the determination that has guided Dr. Clairmont throughout his medical career. Driven by a desire to ‘do whatever it takes’ to deliver quality care to his patients, Dr. Clairmont has stayed at the forefront of primary care medicine, leading the pack, so to speak, through the sometimes tumultuous changes that have rocked the field over the past two decades.

Take a look, for instance, back to 1993. That year, Dr. Clairmont helped launch Physicians’ Health Alliance (PHA), the

state’s first multi-site, primary care group practice. At the time, he was well into his fifth year as a solo, private practice primary care physician in Abington. But, consolidations, mergers, and new physician-hospital organizations (PHOs) were beginning to drive healthcare throughout the state. Realizing that his practice needed to adapt in order to survive, Dr. Clairmont joined a handful of other primary care physicians to create the revolutionary PHA. Initially, the group included 16 South Shore physicians. They worked in different offices, but practiced under one corporate umbrella.

“We looked at the changing environment around us, and it became clear that the best model was to come together as one corporate identity, and put together our resources to improve the care that we can provide to the patients in our community,” Dr. Clairmont says.

Once they started functioning as a network, PHA physicians were also able to offer additional ancillary services – a strategy that ultimately proved beneficial to both patients and physicians alike.

“We realized that we couldn’t survive on reimbursements alone,” Dr. Clairmont continues. “We needed to bring in ancillary supplemental income to offset cost structures, and at the same time, we embraced being able to use our organization to bring added value services, technology and therefore, quality of care, into the community. Coming together as a group, made it possible to not only survive, but thrive, in medicine, here on the South Shore.”

And, “thrive” is precisely what this network has done. Early on, PHA physicians made a name for themselves by being the first in the area to offer the latest in diagnostic testing, like stress echocardiograms and bone densitometry. Then, in 1995, the group joined Partners Community Healthcare, Inc. (PHCI) and changed its name from PHA to Compass Medical P.C. That same



Photo Caption to come

Photo by Debra Troyanos

year, Dr. Clairmont began serving as the network's President, a position he has maintained ever since. As Compass Medical P.C. established its roots along the South Shore, a steady stream of accolades began to pour in. *(Highlight a few awards here. The recognition for diabetes services in 2000? Or the one for medical records in 2004? Maybe include the Partners' awards 1996-present? etc)*

Now, some 14 years since its inception, Compass Medical P.C. has matured into a regional leader in primary care medicine. The group currently boasts a staff of 40 healthcare providers, with more than 250 employees, overall. The network expands across eight clinical practice sites throughout the greater Brockton area, and offers an extensive list of ancillary services, including:

- Full-service laboratory
- Bone density testing
- 24-hour monitoring
- Stress testing
- EMGs
- Event monitoring
- CT scans
- EKGs
- Hearing tests
- Genetic tests for hereditary cancers
- Mammography
- Nuclear scans
- Pulmonary function testing
- Ultrasound
- Xray/radiology

When pushed, Dr. Clairmont admits that Compass Medical's growth and expansion of services has been impressive. But as he sees it, the group isn't anywhere near the finish line, yet. In fact, this network is only starting to hit its stride, he says.

For example, Dr. Clairmont points out that this spring Compass Medical P.C. plans to open a new facility, named the Southeast Medical Center, in East Bridgewater. With more than 70,000 square feet of office space, this "center of excellence" will offer a multi-disciplinary, integrated approach to healthcare. Primary care physicians and specialists will be on site, along with state-of-the-art diagnostic services, including a full-service laboratory and comprehensive radiology (Xray, CT scans, MRI, bone densitometry, mammography, and ultrasound).

In addition to these local clinical services, the Southeast Medical Center will also offer direct access to some of the area's most respected hospitals. A joint venture between Compass Medical P.C., Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and South Shore Hospital, this new facility is likely to transform primary care for thousands of patients in southeastern Massachusetts, Dr. Clairmont says.

"With this new facility, we have an opportunity to

bring some of the fine medical care in Boston into the community and improve access for our patients on the South Shore," he explains. "We're putting care from four fine institutions under one roof. That's going to bring enhanced services into our community and a collaboration that will translate into improved care."

Patients will have easy, local access to ophthalmology and ENT specialists from the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary. And, the new partnership will also provide direct connections with surgical, cardiovascular, and hematology/oncology care at Brigham and Women's and South Shore Hospitals.

"Our patients will have access to care and diagnosis of diseases within the community," Dr. Clairmont explains. "Then, if things need to go to a tertiary or a community hospital, we have a pathway, and it's a pathway with much less obstacles. We know it's not always easy to access care. But, the systems that we have in place – the electronic medical records, the digital imaging – in combination with the interfaces that we're building with clinical care programs will allow smoother, improved access and a higher quality of care within the community."

Compass Medical P.C. has evolved considerably since it be-



Photo Caption to come

Photo by Debra Troyanos

gan as 16 physicians under the PHA umbrella back in 1993. But, even so, Dr. Clairmont stresses that the group remains focused on the one core value that first motivated the network's founders: quality patient care. It's this fundamental dedication to patient care that has been the key to the group's success, he says.

"The number one, most important thing, is that we take care of the patient. Everything else is built around that," Dr. Clair-

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**George J. Clairmont, M.D.
President & CEO, Compass Medical**

mont explains. "Our job is to try and improve the systems around us to better care for patients. If we can't do that correctly, then everything else we've built is no good."

Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that the successful maturation of Compass Medical P.C. has helped Dr. Clairmont develop a refreshingly optimistic outlook on primary care medicine. To him, the future looks bright, as advances in research and technology allow higher quality, more individualized patient care, coupled with even greater opportunities for collaboration be-

tween healthcare providers.

For instance, the new East Bridgewater medical facility is simply "Phase One" of a multi-stage plan to improve primary care in southeastern Massachusetts, Dr. Clairmont says. Other partnerships and renovations are on the horizon, he adds, as network physicians become increasingly pro-active regarding disease prevention and long-term disease management. Working within a multi-disciplinary healthcare net-

work, Compass Medical P.C. physicians can take advantage of cutting-edge diagnostics and treatment protocols, keeping their practices where Dr. Clairmont likes best to be, at the front of the pack.

"There are a lot of parallels to running a marathon," he concludes. "It's about creating a vision for where you want to get to, and then taking it in steps. You have to maintain the vision, and not give up, despite bumps in the road. The practice of primary care medicine has evolved tremendously over the past 15 years, but because we've kept our focus, while still being willing to change, we have been able to succeed and bring high quality care to our patients."



Photo caption to come