

Private Practice Playbook

What is private practice?

In this playbook, we define private practice as a practice that is wholly owned by physicians. Private practice is an attractive option for physicians seeking the freedom and independence to practice in a setting that allows them to provide personalized medical care for their patients. It is inclusive of practice owners, employed physicians and independent contractors.

Throughout the 20th century, small independent physician-owned primary care practices formed the bedrock of the health care system in the United States. [...] evidence shows that they deliver care that is equal to or better than that of practices owned by hospitals and health systems.

—Rittenhouse DR, et al.

Many physicians train in a landscape dominated by large medical organizations and are unaware of opportunities to enter private practice. And yet, about 50% of all physicians in the U.S. are in private practice. The shift away from private practice and toward health systems has not uniformly led to projected improvements in care delivery or reductions in the cost of care. This observation, coupled with already present concerns surrounding access to care, has led to questions about the long-term sustainability of private practices.

How can we tackle this problem? How will this playbook help?

Private practice is an attractive option for physicians seeking the freedom and independence to practice in a setting that allows them to provide personalized medical care for their patients, and is inclusive of practice owners, employed physicians and independent contractors.

It takes astute clinical judgement, effective collaboration with colleagues and innovative problem-solving to succeed in an independent setting that is often fluid, and the AMA offers the resources and support physicians need to both start and sustain success in private practice. This

playbook describes the characteristics, benefits and challenges of private practice for physicians considering entering this model of care. The goal of this playbook is to offer foundational knowledge on private practice to allow physicians to enter meaningful conversations with professional advisors and peers.

Who is this playbook for?

This Private Practice Playbook (PDF) is for:

- Physicians who are aspiring to open a private practice
- Physicians who are aspiring to enter an established private practice
- Practice managers
- Operations leaders

The AMA seeks to preserve the freedom, independence and integrity of private practice and this playbook was developed in support of those physicians who choose to practice in that setting so that they are able to provide compassionate and personal medical care for their patients.

Download the playbook

7 STEPS to Starting a Private Practice

The right road map can make private practice a reality. See how with the AMA's 7 STEPS to Starting a Private Practice (PDF).