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### OPINION

# QUALITY HEALTH CARE CAN'T ALWAYS BE CONVENIENT

HAVING A DOCTOR WHO KNOWS YOU AND YOUR MEDICAL HISTORY SHOULD NEVER BE UNDERRATED, SAYS DR. NADIA ALAM



NADIA ALAM  
Column

The world has changed since I was a kid.

iPads. Alexa. Google. Netflix. Apps. Smart homes. Electric cars. USB 3.0. Banking from your iPhone. Open source web browsers, operating systems and encyclopedias.

There is more computing power in your hand right now than you had in your home in the entire decade between 1990 and 2000.

I look at iTunes and remember my first Walkman. The time it took to record my mixtape of Madonna, Depeche Mode and Nirvana. Of listening for the song on the radio, hitting record right when it started, hitting pause just as it ended — but before the radio announcer's voice came on.

I love that I can do so much on my phone. While some of it is surfing uselessly on the sea of social media, I love that so much of it is actually productive. My phone is my office. I can attend meetings and seminars. Research. Scan. Fax. Write reports and create presentations. I can even remotely access patient medical records while on house calls for my complex housebound patients.

Over the past couple of months, I've introduced virtual visits using OTN, the Ontario Telemedicine Network. I can now securely see patients over my phone — while they're away for university, cooking dinner or even while they're taking a break at work.

It's convenient.

But it isn't appropriate for everything. My patient, a busy young mom of three, went to a walk-in clinic because it was more

convenient. She was seen by a doctor via video. It was a random doctor, someone who didn't know her or her medical history. She came to see me right after because something about the interaction didn't sit right with her.

Turned out to be a missed diagnosis.

As a society, we are busier than ever before. We value convenience more than ever before.

But health care is not convenient. And good care can't always be convenient. Continuity of care, having a doctor who knows you, understands you and knows your medical and social history matters. It improves patient outcomes time and again.

Access is important — being seen quickly for urgent issues; being able to book a non-urgent appointment within a week or two. But access to your own medical doctor makes a bigger difference to your health and your life than access to any random provider. Knowing you, knowing your health and social history, and knowing your patterns matters.

Your health is worth the time and patience.

*Nadia Alam is a Georgetown physician and past president of the Ontario Medical Association. Her columns also appear on [www.medi-um.com/@docschmadia](http://www.medi-um.com/@docschmadia). She can be reached at [nadia.alam@oma.org](mailto:nadia.alam@oma.org).*

Michael's

MAKE CREATIVITY HAPPEN

### CORRECTION NOTICE

In the circular beginning Friday, February 28, 2020, the Charisma™ and Impeccable® Yarn by Loops & Threads® on page 2 printed with the incorrect Reg. price. The correct Reg. price is 4.99 – 5.79.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Michael's

MAKE CREATIVITY HAPPEN

### CORRECTION NOTICE

In the circular beginning Friday, February 28, 2020, we are announcing the introduction of Cricut Joy™. The machine and materials will be available for purchase beginning Sunday, 3/1/2020.

We omitted the machine & materials availability date in the ad and apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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