



Could Your Doctor Help You Get a Second Opinion?

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Andrew Schorr:

Dr. Spurgeon, I wanna ask you about something else. Sometimes we're reluctant. We're referred to a physician. We're diagnosed.

We wonder, are we getting the whole picture? How do you feel about second opinions? Either people coming to you for a second opinion, or somebody saying, "I love you, Dr. Spurgeon, but I'm gonna go down the road and get another opinion and think about all this." How do you feel about that?

Dr. Spurgeon:

I think they're great. I think whatever context you can—whatever helps you out. My biases don't ever, if you need a second and third opinion to help you, by all means go for it. I think if your physician balks at that, you need to find a new physician. I do think it gets to the point of diminishing returns a little bit and causes confusion, however. I do think if you start, you go one center, then you go somewhere else and again. Maybe, everyone's sort of similar, but there are some nuances where everyone's not seeing eye to eye.

I do think at some point it becomes a point where it's just overwhelming. I think the bottom line is I enjoy giving second opinions. I think it's great when my patients go get other opinions. Then, ultimately, you have to decide what the best fit is for your physician. After we are done licking our wounds because our pride is so damaged, I think the reality is, the bottom line is it's whoever you're more comfortable with. If you see me, and then you go see Dr. Keating. You decide Dr. Keating's the person for me. Great.

Andrew Schorr:

Mm-hmm. Dr. Sharman?

Dr. Sharman:

I wanna echo your sentiment, that if a doctor balks at you getting a second opinion, get a second doctor. I think your point about the diminishing returns deserves a little bit of clarification that I agree with. Which is, I watched this with my own father who had some arthritic issues in his back. There can be a paralysis by analysis. One of the worst things we do is bring a patient into two different doctors and give them conflicting recommendations.

The patient, I think, is oftentimes left with a great deal of ambiguity about, who do I like more? That's not the way to pick a therapy. One of the things I try to do with my own patients is I say, "Look, here's where I think there's a lot of consensus, and here's where you're gonna find a diversity of opinion. In your circumstance, if you go get a second opinion, here's what you might expect. Frankly, here's what this," if I know a CLL provider, I said, "Here's what I know their, what some of their tendencies are as well."

Ultimately, I've got no problem getting on the phone with a second opinion to hammer out a plan and say, hey, this is what we talked about and so forth. I think they can be very useful. I love for patients to get second opinions in many cases. Just if I have sense that they're not comfortable with my treatment recommendation, by all means go get a second opinion.

Then, they can come back and feel a degree of confidence that the recommendation is a good one.

Dr. Kolibaba:

We can help you find a second opinion. Just as Jeff said. We can predict what differences might be out there. Or, your information style or find out where you want to go. So, ask, and we'll help get you in, get the records, all that.

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