

Primary care doctors an 'increasingly endangered species'

By David Ryder, New York Times

Is the doctor in?

In this new medical age of urgent care centers and retail clinics, that's not a simple question. Nor does it have a simple answer, as primary care doctors become increasingly scarce.

"You call the doctor's office to book an appointment," said Matt Feit, a 45-year-old screenwriter in Los Angeles who visited an urgent care center eight times last year. "They're only open Monday through Friday from these hours to those hours, and, generally, they're not the hours I'm free or I have to take time off from my job.

"I can go just about anytime to urgent care," he continued, "and my copay is exactly the same as if I went to my primary doctor."

That's one reason big players like CVS Health, the drugstore chain, and most recently Walmart, the giant retailer, are eyeing deals with Aetna and Humana, respectively, to use their stores to deliver medical care.

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