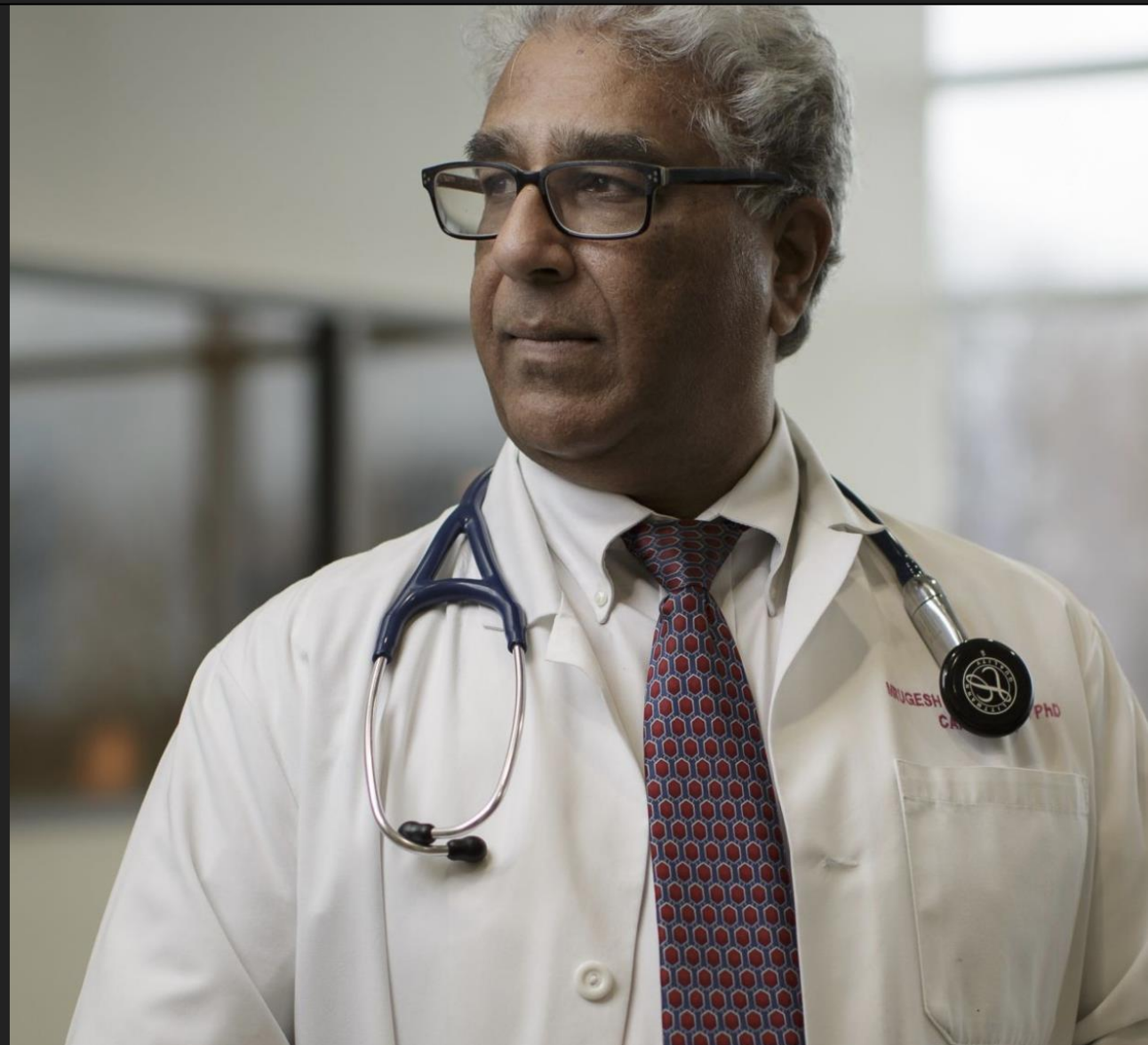




BUSINESS

The Hidden System That Explains How Your Doctor Makes Referrals

More primary-care doctors work directly for hospitals, and they are being pushed to keep lucrative referrals in-house



Patients are often in the dark about why their doctors referred them to a particular physician or facility. Increasingly, those calls are being driven by pressure to keep business within a hospital system, even if an outside referral might benefit the patient, according to documents and interviews with doctors, hospital executives and lawyers.

Losing patients to competitors is known as “leakage.”

Hospitals, in response, use an array of strategies to encourage “keepage” within their systems, which in recent years have expanded their array of services.