

Working Toward Wellness

Money and a Whole Lot More at Stake

By Michael F. Campbell

(Editor's Note: First of a series)

Recently, on Paul Harvey's weekly syndicated news broadcast, he noted some health care facts. We're all familiar with the overwhelming medical statistical data, but these numbers really stood out.

Harvey stated that one in every 10 health claims today in the United States is methamphetamine related. A recent *USA Today* survey of 200 hospitals in 39 states and Washington D.C. supported this report. Harvey also noted that one of the top reasons for the enormity of health care costs is due to the majority of doctors and hospitals having to take all patients, whether they can pay or not.

In recent presentations, I list 11 major categories that itemize the drivers behind health care costs today. We can all point to items such as 44% of the Latino adult population in Indiana being uninsured. We can also wave the red flag regarding the lawsuit crisis, the quality of care and the high cost of prescription drugs.

But, according to the Centers for Disease Control, of the major determinants of health, lifestyle is by far the greatest driver. When it comes right down to it, if behavior positively changed, the national health care crisis would evaporate right before our eyes.

Impacts for all

Do you think this problem isn't in your backyard or within the walls of your own home? Consider that this generation is thought to be the first in over 100 years in which children will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. This is due to many factors, including poor diet, lack of exercise and overall bad health.

The average age of the typical video game player today is 29! Such activities have led to an enormous challenge with sedentary lifestyles and a lack of physical activity. This is especially rampant here in Indiana. In 2004, Indianapolis was the 13th fattest city in the United States. Today, we are number 11 and on our way to an inglorious No. 1!

National health care is consuming nearly 17% of the gross domestic product (triple what it was 40 years ago). If we don't stop this trend, it will, pun intended, "eat our lunch."

Making changes

Change behavior, you say? I thought that was impossible. Well, guess what, it can be done. Recently, a friend talked of

losing 45 pounds within the last year and reducing her insulin intake for her type two diabetic conditions. Her doctor has now informed her that he believes she is within reach of reversing the disease due to diet and exercise.

Another dear friend had suffered for years with fibromyalgia. Due to some encouragement from others, she sought alternative medical help and discovered that in fact she had food allergies. After eliminating those foods, the symptoms have gone away. These examples and many others are evidence of what can happen when people



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change their paradigm, re-examine their core values and strive to do the right things.

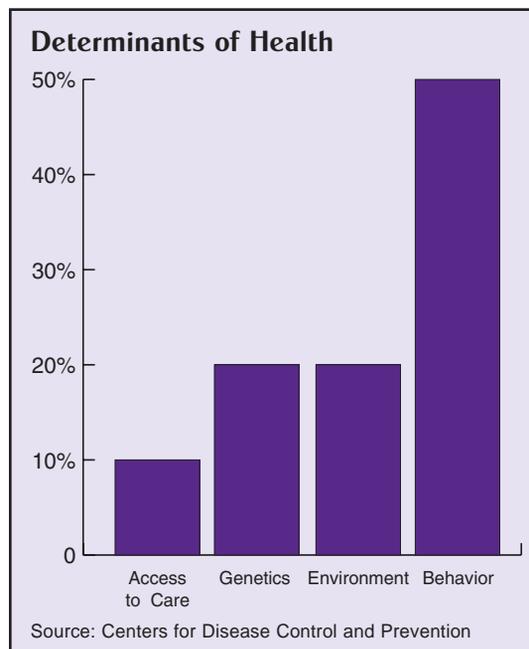
Seeking assistance

Today, many conscientious and right-thinking Indiana employers are searching for answers to provide helpful motivation to their employees. Such help is available. But it does not come easily or without costs. Leadership in our Indiana companies must adopt a new mindset, in turn impacting the culture that will become the conduit through which true wellness will flow.

Some of the best help available today is through the Wellness Council of Indiana, which has assisted many employers in achieving well workplace certification. Our governor has launched a major initiative through INShape Indiana, an effort to impact not only

the individual but assist employers in creating healthier workplaces.

In coming issues of *BizVoice*®, we will explore the many facets of wellness and how it can impact your organization. We will learn that this is about a lot more than just health care costs as we take an in-depth look at health and productivity. Join us as we dig deeper into a truly functioning "well environment" that permeates every function of your business.



INFORMATION LINK

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