Currently about one in six dollars is spent on health care in the United States. By 2015 it is estimated that we will spend one out of five dollars. In 2005 the average cost per person for health care was $6,683. It is estimated that in eight years that will grow to $12,320 per person.

Over the years there have been a number of attempts to reduce health care costs. None have worked. The solutions are not especially complicated, but they are impeded by ignorance, bad habits, and special interest groups. The solutions involve five significant changes in our current approach to health and health care. They are as follows.

First, we as Americans need to understand that most of our health problems are a byproduct of poor lifestyle choices. Every time I go to the grocery store and see what constitutes the majority of the food products that are in the average shopper's buggy and when I check out and the cashier has to ask me what the vegetables are that I am buying, I am reminded of why we are such an unhealthy country.

Second, we need to ensure that we concentrate our health care efforts on treating causes and not simply treating symptoms. Most drugs do not address the cause of a health problem. If out primary approach to health care is based on medication, we are not going to solve our health care problem.

Third, and this is related to the previous one, we need to loosen the grip that the pharmaceutical industry has on our health care system and on our beliefs about health. The U.S. is the only country that allows the drug companies to advertise prescription drugs directly to the consumer. They profit handsomely by convincing us that they have the solution to our health problems

Fourth, we need honest research, free of self-serving conflicts of interest that taint the results for profit. We need to spend our health care dollars on products and services that have demonstrated to improve health. Until all procedures have been tested, those that are more expensive and more risky should bear the burden of proof first. Many procedures have been proven to make a predictable change, like lower cholesterol or lower blood pressure, but they haven't necessarily been proven to prolong life or improve quality of life.

Finally, we need to bring the free market back into health care. The health insurance industry has inflated the cost of health care by making it unnecessary for health care consumers to shop wisely before spending their health care dollars. Those with insurance don't need to concern themselves with the cost of their care and those without, can't afford the inflated prices.

These changes will eventually happen when the sheer financial burden bankrupts the system, or it can happen sooner if we as health care consumers demand these changes before it is too late.

You can read all of my previous articles on my website: www.lifetouchclinics.com.