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High Health Care Cost part 4 by Dr. Baker

by LifeTouch Chiropractic on Monday, February 7, 2011 at 11:45am

This is the forth installment in a series of articles on how to fix our expensive health care system. This week I want to talk about how changing our approach to caring for our health can dramatically improve health and at the same time reduce cost.

As I have mentioned in other articles, we tend to be reactive when it comes to our health. This means we wait until we have a health crisis and then try to fix it. Often we don't even go so far as to try to fix the problem. Instead, we often just end up managing the symptoms, so we feel better, but never really get well.

This is true for most people suffering with diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. It is also true for people with chronic back problems. Doctors prescribe medicine to control the blood sugar, reduce the blood pressure and cholesterol or reduce the back pain, but there is little attention paid to actually reversing the underlying condition.

Doctors will often tell their patients to improve their diet or to exercise, but they don't help the patients to do these things. Many people do not know what type of changes to make in their lifestyle or how to make those changes consistently. Doctors also do not explain, or place enough emphasis on why treating the effect of a disease through medication is not as beneficial to the patient as making lifestyle changes is. Prescribing and taking medications is easier than making lifestyle changes for both the doctor and the patient; however long term use of many medications is often harmful over time.

Doctors also often jump to expensive and in many cases more risky procedures prematurely. Treating back pain is a perfect example. Most general practitioners will start treating a back problem with pain medications. When that doesn't help, they then send those patients to specialists who perform expensive epidural spinal injections or surgery without first recommending less expensive and less invasive procedures like chiropractic, spinal decompression and exercise.

Often the best approach to resolving a health problem is to begin with more natural, less expensive and less invasive procedures and if those are ineffective, then work toward the more expensive and high risk procedures. Unfortunately this is often not done.