

The cost of health care has been a burden for society in the United States for decades and the problem is getting worse. We currently spend \$2 trillion dollars per year on health care, far outspending any other country. Even though we spend more, we have one of the sickest populations in the world.

The Obama administration is hoping to tackle this problem through some type of government funded health system. Changing how health care is paid for, however, doesn't solve the basic problem that we are not getting enough bang for our buck. Without changes in attitudes and our approach to health, we will be no better off.

We don't really have a health care system. It is really a sick care system. We ignore our health until we experience a crisis in the form of a disease. Then we treat the disease or the symptoms of the disease without changing the behaviors that led to the development of the disease in the first place.

In a true health care system, attention is paid to promoting health thus preventing disease and costly treatment. In my chiropractic practice I see a lot of patients who have ignored their spinal health until a crisis has developed. They then come to see me for help. During the course of their recovery, I try to help them to understand the benefits of maintaining the health of their spines once the immediate problem has been corrected.

Those who opt to follow my advice usually find that not only do they have fewer back and neck problems in the future, but they also have better overall health. That is because the spine influences the function of the nerve system and the nerve system regulates the health of the entire body.

A recent study supports this observation. In that study, a large group of patients was followed over 7 years. Half the group chose to use doctors of chiropractic as their primary doctor and the other group chose medical doctors as their primary physician. The chiropractic group demonstrated dramatic cost savings. They had 60% fewer hospital admissions, 62% fewer outpatient surgeries and procedures and an 85% reduction in drug costs.

If we are going to solve this healthcare crisis we are experiencing, we have to do more than simply shift the way we pay for it from insurance premiums to taxes. We have to change our approach. Chiropractic needs to be an integral component of this new approach.