



# Reducing Health Care Costs being Proactive

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## Introduction

Often times when we think about the issues that are affecting us currently in our lives, the solution rests almost completely outside our control. When we watch the evening news, we often wish there could be something that would help the situations we just observed, and are left feeling helpless. In medicine, when we see the cases and the epidemics; the nursing homes, the VA Hospitals, the specialty clinics-if only we had the perfect drug, the right health care policy, the manpower with just the right knowledge, and of course, the funding. We all lament the things that are just out of control; if only there had been an earlier intervention made. What we often don't realize is that those opportunities at intervention which would control health care costs and greatly improve the likelihood of successful or positive health outcomes are well within our reach, our power, and our funding.

The answer for many conditions lies in sound nutritional habits-the earlier in life the better. Our parents taught us to do the right things-brush our teeth, eat our vegetables, and limit our sugar and sweet drinks. The urgency was not there, though. It was something our parents were supposed to say because they were parents. We didn't see ourselves with bad teeth or bones, diabetes, or diseases of the lungs and liver. The most immediate feedback was about our teeth from our dentist. The dentist could fix it though, making our discomfort go away. Therein is one of the big problems with our expectation of healthcare as we grow. "Can you fix it, doctor?", and there was almost always a "Yes"-followed by a little endurable pain, unlike the excruciating pain that hit our parents' wallets. In America we have been spoiled by our ability to "fix it" with increasingly expensive procedures.

We could take almost all of our expense away with some proactive responsibility on our parts-following those preventative diets and procedures. Did we? Now we sit as a nation with the most staggering costs that have reached beyond our wildest dreams-virtually taking down the country that we have worked so hard to build. We want everyone to fix our health care cost problem-to bring down the prices of the drugs, the technologies, and the procedures. It's time we take a more proactive approach. Take care of ourselves, and teach others in our society to take care of them. Eat right, exercise, and lead by example. Osteoporosis is a condition that is an excellent example of proactive health care eliminating most of the burden to oneself and the community. Good diet, to include calcium and vitamin D, and exercise will go a long way toward preventing osteoporosis-eliminating expensive drugs, the possibility of expensive hip fractures, and more.

We are aware that there are also genetic and environmental aspects to osteoporosis, but think of the progress that diet and exercise would make toward reducing the burden of this condition. There are a number of other health conditions that fit this scenario. It should seem obvious-the nutrients we take into our bodies are the building blocks on which an individual's health is built. If we can get our society to be proactive via nutritional excellence, then I believe we could watch our health care costs melt to a very manageable number. Can we fix it? Yes we can. Invest a very little at a younger age along with some will power, or face unmanageable costs later. It is really quite within our control.

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