

In this month's Chamber Spotlight we once again highlight the services our community provides to promote health. Health has been a political hot topic recently with the President's goal of passing significant healthcare reform this year. This debate has been polarizing; creating intense arguments in legislative chambers, town halls, dining rooms and taverns throughout the country.

According to a study performed by "The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation" in 2008 the average annual premium for single coverage health insurance was \$4,704 and for family coverage the number climbed to \$12,680. Regardless of who is paying the premium, someone is paying a heavy price for health insurance. Although, most of us have very little voice in the final outcome of the health care reform bill there are some things that we can do as individuals to control the premium that either our employers pay or control the premium that is paid out of pocket.

- Take advantage of the local health fairs. This is a preventive measure that may prevent catastrophic illness later.
- Try to exercise and eat healthy. According to a study performed by the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention an obese person has \$1,429 per year more in medical costs. That makes a gym membership seem relatively inexpensive in comparison.
- Utilize our local experts for preventive health as well as to diagnose problems. Many of our physicians and therapists can set you up with a wellness program. Another great resource is a physical trainer who can help you reach your health goals through nutrition and exercise.

The resources to take control of our health are available in our community, but it is up to us as individuals to take advantage of them. If we are able to control the things we can control through better health, we may better prepare ourselves to cope with the things we cannot control both physically and financially. So the next time we turn on the nightly news and hear the media pundits jawboning for their version of the bill, turn off the TV and take a walk. As that quite literally will be the first step in lowering our health care costs.

Brandon J. Wade

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