

HEALTH MATTERS

Health Care Reform and You

For Your Health

BY LARRY LUCAS

From last summer's town hall meetings to this fall's mid-term election ads, no doubt you've heard a lot about health care reform. But what does it mean for you? It's time to stop the rhetoric and get the facts. Thanks to new provisions and discount programs introduced in the landmark legislation, more Americans than ever before will have access to improved health care, including their prescriptions.

Today's tough economy has forced many to make difficult decisions about their health, like choosing to go without needed medicines so they can pay for food. This is a choice no one should have to make, and both lawmakers and those in the health care industry recognize that.

The new coverage gap discount program in the Medicare prescription drug benefit will help prevent seniors from ever having to make that choice. The coverage gap, or "donut hole," occurs when patients'

prescription costs reach a limit under their coverage plans, forcing them to pay for the remaining costs of their medicines up to a certain point.

To help reduce the out-of-pocket costs facing Medicare beneficiaries within the coverage gap, beginning in 2011, America's biopharmaceutical research companies will provide a 50 percent discount on brand-name medicines to eligible beneficiaries. When combined with government contributions, the coverage gap will be effectively closed over the next 10 years.

But the Medicare coverage gap discount program is only part of the larger health reform overhaul. Another important issue is working to bridge the huge disparity between those who have access to health care and those who do not – a particularly profound problem in our community where patients without



insurance may rely on emergency rooms or free clinics for care.

Critically, the new health reform law expands the health workforce and increases funding for community health centers to provide care for everyone – no matter how much they are able to pay.

Access to quality medicines takes more than just dollars and cents; it takes an enormous investment in the research and development of new and better treatments – to the tune of 10-15 years and more than \$1 billion for a single medicine.

Long before health care reform was a reality, patients could turn to the Partnership for Prescription Assistance for help. Today, this nationwide effort sponsored by America's biopharmaceutical research companies is still providing access to patient assistance programs that provide free or nearly free medicines to patients in need.

For more information, call 1-888-4PPA-NOW or visit pparx.org.

Larry Lucas is a retired vice president for the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

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Q: I continue to hear that diet and exercising are helpful in maintaining a strong body. But where do I begin? There is so much literature and when I ask my doctor he seems unconcerned. How can I get started?

A: A good way to begin is with the basics. Since 1895 Chiropractic has been the leader in teaching the basics of health to our society. Good health must include proper nutrition. A general rule of thumb is that foods high in fiber are best for you. Limit your meats and refined foods as well as

alcohol. Get plenty of exercise. For most people it only takes an hour or so a week to stay fit. Walking at a brisk pace with good arm swing is excellent. Rest is paramount. Everyone feels better after a good night's sleep. In Chiropractic, we will often recommend relaxation exercises as well. Have a joyful spirit. Scientists know now that our attitudes actually affect our entire chemis-

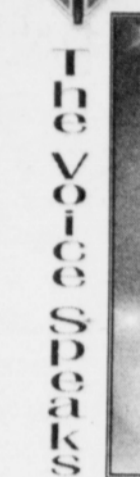
try. Finally, always keep a healthy nervous system. Chiropractic is especially suited for understanding the effect of stress on the nervous system and how to eliminate it. Total fitness can be only a call away and worth so much more than just another pain prescription. Isn't it time you stepped up to safe effective Chiropractic?

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