

# HEALTH

## For Your Health

Recently, we've heard a lot of good news about job growth and the pace of economic recovery in the U.S. And while we're certainly headed in the right direction, there are still many Americans who are living under tighter budgets. For some, this may mean fewer vacations or less dining out. Unfortunately, others are left unable to afford vital medical services.

This is especially true for seniors and retirees who are on fixed incomes. According to a recent study by a Washington-based think tank,

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more than 27 percent of Americans over the age of 50 reported difficulty in paying monthly bills. What's worse, of those surveyed, about 20 percent reported switching to cheaper medications, failing to take current prescriptions or skipping doctor visits to save money.

Within our community, African Americans were among those most likely to report prescription drug

## Basic Steps to Improve Your Health

changes (25.9 percent) and missed or postponed doctor appointments (27.3 percent).

But this research doesn't mean that living healthier isn't a priority for seniors and their families. In fact, the opposite is true. Now more than ever, people are looking for simple changes and decisions they can make to feel and live healthier. This month, National Public Health Week – A Healthier America Begins Today – focuses on the little steps we can take to improve our overall health, including chronic disease prevention.

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death in the United States, and unfortunately, African Americans are more likely to contract many of the most common fatal chronic diseases than their white counterparts. However, there are steps you can take to have a meaningful impact on reducing your risk of chronic disease.

For example, diabetes, a chronic disease that is particularly prevalent in the African American community, may be prevented if you make healthy food choices and pursue an active lifestyle. You can also reduce the risk of other chronic diseases by making simple changes to your lifestyle, such as quitting smoking, which can cause lung cancer. And just as critical in the prevention of these diseases is early detection.

Education and regular screenings promise the greatest chance of successful treatment. This year's World Health Day theme, "Good health adds years to life," encourages older men and women to take charge of their well-being and to champion health in their families and communities.

In cases when developing a

chronic disease or other illness is beyond our control, medications are available to help reduce the negative effects these diseases have on patients' lives. In order for a treatment to be successful, patients need to take prescribed medications as recommended by their doctor. But in today's economic times, not everyone can afford the medicines they need. Fortunately, there are programs available to help.

This month marks the seventh anniversary of the Partnership for Prescription Assistance, a program from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America that has helped connect nearly 7 million patients to patient assistance programs that provide free or nearly free prescriptions.

PPA connects patients to more than 475 assistance programs provided by pharmaceutical research companies and offers more than 2,500 brand-name medicines. For more information, you can visit [pparx.org](http://pparx.org) or call 1-888-4PPA-NOW.

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

America.

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## HEALTH WATCH

**Osteoporosis Screening** -- An ultrasound bone density screening with personalized education; fee \$30. To schedule an appointment, call 503-261-6611.

**Family Caregiver Support Group** -- This topic-oriented group offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and rewards of providing care to an older relative or friend. Meets the first Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital.

**Free Body Basics** -- This physician recommended class is appropriate for all ages and health conditions. Plan to attend this one-session class and learn the simple guidelines for safe exercises, including stretching. Call 503-256-4000 to register.

**Empowerment through Relaxation** -- Free informal meditation classes that address breathing techniques, some gentle ancient African yoga poses and mental balancing techniques. People have left these classes joyful and with a peaceful view of their lives. Call Dr. Marcelitte Failla at 503-228-6140.

**Tenderfoot Care** -- Treat your feet with a soak, nail trim, buffing and massage from a licensed nurse at one of six clinics or at your home. Call 503-251-6303 for more information.

**Cancer Resource Center** -- Providence St. Vincent Medical Center and the American Red Cross have joined forces to create the first in-hospital resource center providing books, printed material, computer access and more for individuals and families dealing with cancer. The center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Lead Poisoning Prevention** -- Learn how to protect your family from lead poisoning. Ideal for folks in live in older homes with children or pregnant women. Qualified participants receive a free kit of safety and testing supplies. Call 503-284-6827.

**Families with Mental Illness** -- A free, 12-week course for people whose family members live with mental illness is offered at Emanuel Hospital, Mt. Hood Medical Center and Providence Medical Center. The course has been described as "life-changing" by former participants. Registration is required by calling 503-203-3326.

## Chiropractic Auto Injury Clinic, PC

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