

APRIL—2009

Iowa District West

Human Care

“Prevention Pays....in Longer, Healthier Lives”

Recently, the Congressional Budget Office gave a report on health-care proposals. This CBO report stated that preventive care will not reduce health costs significantly, inferring that the longer people live, the more money they'll cost our govt. in Medicare and Social Security benefits. Apparently, they are saying that dying early can save our government lots of money. In addition, John R. Graham, director of health-care studies at the Pacific Research Institute weighed in on this subject, saying that investing in prevention does not reduce the amount of money we spend on chronic disease.

Tom Newton, director of the Iowa Department of Public Health, has made an interesting observation: While seeking a major overhaul of health care, have we become so embroiled in health care costs that we've forgotten a key expected outcome from a reformed system? He says we need to shift our focus away from mere costs to what can be done so that everyone can live long, healthy, and productive lives.

In this larger context, then, prevention, along with early intervention, policy change and chronic-disease management, can help to maintain and improve the overall health of us all, helping us all to make the most of the God-given time we have in life, whatever amount of time that may be. (Ephesians 5:15-16). In light of this, here are some examples of preventive health being done in Iowa:

Community Wellness— The epidemic of overweight and obesity can be tackled effectively with comprehensive community wellness programs. When schools, businesses, and policymakers work together in developing a comprehensive community approach, such as the schools

in Henry County. In 2005, the percentage of students who were overweight was 41%. Today, that percentage has dropped to 33%. Why? Because of policy changes in the school lunch program.

Early Intervention— According to an Iowa Cancer Registry report, an estimated 3,066 Iowans have been saved between 1997 and 2005, most of whom had prostate, colorectal, female breast, and male lung cancers, which for years have been responsible for more than 50% of cancer deaths.

Managing Chronic Disease— While the number of Iowans with asthma has remained the same since 1999, better management of the conditions has contributed to an annual savings of \$9.2 million in hospital costs alone. Asthma-management strategies are having an impact, especially among children under 4 years of age, where the hospitalization rate has dropped from 30 per 10,000 in 1995 to 13 per 10,000 in 2006.

Health Policy Change— The \$1 tax increase passed by the 2007 Iowa General Assembly resulted in some major changes in tobacco use. The number of cigarettes sold between March 2007 and March 2008 dropped 36%! The percentages of adults who smoke has dropped from 20% to 14% during this time also, giving Iowa one of the lowest percentages of any state in the country.

Benefits like these go far beyond money saved. They help to give us better quality in life, better chronic disease management, and better health practices for us all, which can result in both a longer and healthier life for us all. For more information, you may contact Tom Newton at tnewton@idph.state.ia.us.

“Life thoughts” for you from Lutherans for Life

The answer to so many issues we face today doesn't lie in making more laws. While the law helps to curb human behavior, it cannot change people within. Only the Gospel has the power to transform us into becoming all that God has created us to be, people who belong to God & live in His light.

Are we ashamed of Jesus and His Word (Mark 8:38) when we cower from addressing the life issues in our congregations? This “adulterous and sinful generation” is speaking loudly when it comes to focusing our attention on “the things of man” (v. 33). As congregations who affirm God's gifts of life, we need to powerfully proclaim Jesus as the Christ, pointing people's minds and hearts to “the things of God.”



John 3:16 has often been called, “the Gospel in a nutshell.” A seminary professor commented, “How does anyone think the Gospel could ever possibly be contained in a nutshell?” True, the Gospel is too wide and high and deep to ever be contained. Yet, it is also a simple message. So, daring to summarize the summary of John 3:16, we can simply say, “God loves life!”

Building Healthy Families (a helpful tip from Lutheran Family Service of Iowa)

The downturn in our economy has the potential to affect more than just our bank accounts, spending power, and retirement plans. Concerns about money and finances are becoming more threatening to our relationships.

The Journal of Marriage & Family Therapy recently published a study in which issues

over money ranked only second to infidelity as a leading cause of divorce. In these financially stressed times, be sure to pay special attention to what matters most...the basics in your marriage—clear and honest communication, respect, trust, mutual sacrifice, and shared Bible reading and prayer time.

For your questions or comments, contact:

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Lutheran Family Service of Iowa has an office near you. Just call their toll free number: 1-800-622-7285.

A prayer for your kitchen table

Lord, we thank You for Your grace,

Our needs are met here in this place.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. Let these gifts to us be blest.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,

And His mercy endures forever. Amen

