



Debra L. Sears

Live, Laugh and Love... Be Happy!

A healthy lifestyle is the result of quality nutrition, regular mental and physical exercise and prudent supplementation"... Nature requires a balance of mind, body and spirit to maintain optimal health.

The health insurance industry is experiencing a lot of attention with the Affordable Healthcare Act, the new innovations in medicine, the transparency of our medical records, new compliance issues, pharmaceutical use, more taxation, etc. Never does it address getting, being and staying healthy. We have more control over our health than we actually realize. It is very easy to get into our routine or the rut of our daily duties regardless of some essential elements. This could be getting to work, getting kids to school and activities, after work and school schedules, etc. and then at days end, we are in bed and tomorrow we do it all over again.

If we would take a look at the amount of rest that is recommended for us as it compares to what we allow for ourselves we would be surprised. Do we start our day with caffeine? Do we eat a light healthy breakfast or grab a pastry or fast food item? Do we drink enough water? Do we consume high fructose drinks and foods? What is in the foods that we eat – have you read the label? Portion size?? Do we exercise with regularity?

It has been proven that outside of genetics, we can improve on our well-being. If we start with the inner self – are we happy? Are we spiritually grounded? Do we laugh? What do we do for others in a day's time? These are all things that are free but we need to make a conscious effort to think about the end results of our actions. In fact, some of the longest living people on the earth are financially poor, but they are rich in spirit. They are thankful, they walk, they drink lots of water and they "do unto others."

I see reform, I see rates, I hear people struggling with the balance of work and home – many working to provide the health care insurance for the family regardless of what they feel good about. But seldom do I hear one with a "plan for themselves and family" that addresses healthy habits.

There is a recent worthwhile article from NBC Nightly News titled: *Americans live longer, but are sicker than those in other countries*. It states, "Our biggest enemies are our own bad habits – poor diet, smoking and obesity." These are things that we can change. I realize that changing habits comes with a great desire and a plan. Old habits die slow, but I think if we do a self-evaluation and make diligent, small steps towards healthier decisions, sometimes those lead to greater outcomes than we may expect. In Wellmark's Blue Spring 2013 edition, there is an article, *How to Really Change*, that I think is worth a read. As we constantly are reminded of our medical insurance premium costs and the health

benefits that we may have within our health plan, we may be able to save our health and a few dollars along the way. If you want to take the time to visit www.wellmark.com you will find many resources that are free and very helpful.

A couple of books that I find very enriching are *The Blue Zones* and *Thrive* by Dan Buettner. He talks about several places in the world where people live a very long life, how that has been accomplished and their happiness. Wellmark has adopted the ideas from Buettner and you will also find those on Wellmark's site. Please do not overlook the Power of 9, which is also a part of the Blue Zones concept.

Another long-time favorite of mine is Dr. Andrew Weil. He advocates holistic methods to help you maintain your quality of health and age gracefully. He quotes, "A healthy lifestyle is the result of quality nutrition (in particular, an anti-inflammatory diet), regular mental and physical exercise and prudent supplementation. Simple steps in these areas can help to promote the health of the whole body and/or its constituent parts, and decrease the risk of many major diseases." He and his contributions to health and wellness have been recognized by CNN, *Newsweek* and *The Huffington Post* to name a few. He can be found at www.Dr.Weil.com.

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