

INFINITE WISDOM

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Special points of interest:

- Individualized health care when you need it.
- Same day or next day appointments.
- Want to talk to your own doctor? Call.
- See your doctor, not a random on call doc in the office

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CAPITOL HILL VISIT

I recently went to a meeting of Direct Primary Care (DPC) physicians in Washington DC. The day before the meeting started many of us visited our Senators and Representatives on Capitol Hill to lobby for a piece of legislation. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) with co-sponsor Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) unveiled legislation (S 1358) which matched the edition already passed by the House, The Primary Care Enhancement Act (H.R. 365). This legislation from both houses of Congress clearly makes the IRS interpret that a monthly DPC membership payment is in fact a qualified medical expense. There is no law that says that it is not, but that is the IRS's interpreta-



tion. DPC is recognized in a number of pieces of legislation already. The bill also defines that paying a DPC membership fee does not constitute enrolling in a health care plan as defined by the IRS. This also makes it so much easier to have a membership fee come from a Health Savings Account (HSA). Lastly it also clarifies and puts to federal law that DPC is not considered an insurance. About half the states have already codified this individually at

a bipartisan level. We expect this legislation to pass as it is not controversial. The major stumbling block may be all the rancor going on now. S 1358, The Primary Care Enhancement Act was unveiled the day we met with the Senators and their staff. It was an exciting moment. I spoke to Senator Cassidy (R-LA) and his staff and well as the staff of Senator Kennedy (R-LA) in the hopes of encouraging him to cosponsor the legislation. The more the better. I was to meet with Representative Steve Scalise (R-LA) but he was injured in the shooting the day before. I did get a chance to meet with Greg Watson, his Health Policy Staff. Mr. Scalise continues to improve. Keep praying.

AHCA

Legislation is pending in the form of the American Health Care Act or AHCA. It is a Senate modification of the bill passed by the House. It puts Medicaid on a budget. Medicaid will no longer be open-ended. It eliminates the taxes imposed by the ACA (Obamacare). It eliminates the subsidies for deductibles and copays to lower income people. AHCA re-



duces tax credits for some and expands them for others including those below the poverty line. It allows individual states to waive certain coverage rules that were created under ACA.

AHCA keeps the pre-existing condition mandate and age 26 inclusion. It allows insurers to charge older customers a bit more than the ACA allowed. Under the ACA a US citizen could be penalized if they did not purchase health insurance. The new bill eliminates that penalty. AHCA gives more funding
(Continued on pg 2)

LAB CORNER...BNP

“heart muscles with the pressure tension release a chemical called Brain Natriuretic Peptide or BNP.”

Heart failure is a common condition where a person with heart disease has a heart that doesn't pump as efficiently as it should. It can be caused by a host of different reasons.

The common symptom we see is the build up of fluid in the body. When the heart does not pump well it causes the buildup of fluid in the heart, lungs and legs. Buildup in the lungs can cause shortness of breath. We can diagnose this using a chest x-ray and an ultrasound picture of the heart. We



have long waited a blood test to help us diagnose heart failure.

The researches found that when the blood pressure and fluid swelling builds up in the heart it places more tension on the muscles in the heart. They have found that heart muscles with the pressure tension release a chemical called

Brain Natriuretic Peptide or BNP. This protein was first found in pig brains, hence the name but the heart muscle is the primary origin. The BNP (or one of its components) acts to decrease resistance in the blood vessels and stimulates urination to get rid of the fluid and the pressure. This simple blood test can help us rapidly diagnose if a person with shortness of breath might have heart failure as the cause. This test is typically ordered in the hospital.

FOOD POISONING

“care needs to be taken to prevent food borne illnesses.”

Many people will celebrate this great country's 241st birthday with a gathering of family, friends and food. Whether you cook the food yourself or get it from a store or restaurant, care needs to be taken to prevent food borne illnesses—food poisoning.

If you have ever had any type of food poisoning, you know that it is no fun.



You can have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and cramps and even fever. While some food contamination

occurs before the food gets to you, we can prevent food poisoning during preparation, serving and storage. While this may seem obvious, many times we get lax in doing these things: using clean utensils, washing all produce thoroughly, keeping raw meat, chicken, fish, eggs, etc away from foods that aren't going to be cooked,

AHCA...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“If the AHCA comes to a vote in the Senate it will have no impact of Infinity Health membership.”

flexibility to Health Savings Accounts.

The AHCA is made a bit awkward in that Obamacare does not have enough votes to be repealed. The new legislation (AHCA) is put in a position of having to chip away at some of the ACA law and patch it with new law. The current political cli-

mate does not allow the slate to be wiped clean with then a fresh start.

The AHCA does not specifically enlist the participation of Direct Primary Care practices (such as Infinity Health) can thrive regardless of the insurance model. If the AHCA comes to a vote in the Senate it

will have no impact of Infinity Health membership. The natural consequence of eliminating Obamacare should be to reduce premiums which have already risen. With only 52 Republican Senators it becomes an all or none situation. I can't imagine how they will get 50 out of 52 to vote yes on anything but it should be interesting.

DIABETES AGAIN

This month I'm going to talk about Type 2 diabetes mellitus. I know I've done it before and I'm sure I'll do it again. In recent years, there has been an explosion in the number of diagnosed diabetics. Who knows how many people are undiagnosed? There are many reasons for the increase in diabetes. As a nation, we have gotten heavier. You do not have to be obese. Overweight people can also get it. The Western diet, which is high in fat and sugar, is not good for your health. Sedentary lifestyles are bad for us.

For more information contact



So why is diabetes bad? Diabetes causes a change in your blood vessels. It can adversely affect your eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart causing permanent damage. The good news is that if diagnosed and treated, the damage can be minimized. If you are diagnosed with diabetes, Dr. Hanson can go in-depth into your lifestyle and help you make

corrective changes. If needed, he can send you to a dietician to help decrease the fat and sugar intake in your diet. Increasing your physical activity, even just a little, can help decrease insulin resistance that your body may have developed. If you are overweight, dropping a few pounds can help. Finally, there are effective medications you can take. Each year, Dr. Hanson can order lab tests to make sure you are not a pre-diabetic or diabetic. Make sure you come in and get yours done annually.

"Diabetes can adversely affect your eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart ..."

FOOD POISONING.... CONTINUED

correct temperature, keeping cold food on ice when out for serving, keeping hot foods hot, promptly putting food away after an event. When your event is over and leftovers are being given out, think carefully as to how long the food has been out and at what temperature. While we don't like to waste food, be



mindful as to whether it is safe. Finally, after you take your

leftovers home, also be aware of how long they stay in the refrigerator. Eat them promptly. I have had my children call and say, "this food has been in the refrigerator for ___ days, do you think I can still eat it. I always say, "if in doubt, throw it out" It's not worth being sick to save a few pieces of food or a few dollars. Enjoy the 4th!

DUPUYTREN'S

Do you have a finger or fingers contracting but never injured the finger? You could have Dupuytren's contracture, or disease, Dupuytren's affects men more than women and develops over time. It starts with nodules or thickening of tissue in the palm. Usually these nodules are painless. The



disease can stop with just the palm nodules or progress to the fingers (ring or the ones adjacent to ring). When it progresses, it causes a thickening or cord to develop

in the finger causing it to contract. Treatment depends on how severe the bending of the finger occurs. It can be needling, enzyme injections or surgery. Unfortunately, even with treatment, the contracture can reoccur. If you have Dupuytren's, you should consult a hand doctor to see what is your best option

"Dupuytren's ...causes a thickening of tissue in the palm"

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We are on the web!
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*An Invitation:
If you know of a friend or family member that would be interested in becoming a member, please have them contact us for a free non-medical meet-and-greet visit.*



A

Direct Primary Care
Practice

Newsletter

written and published
by Karl N. Hanson, MD

Previous Newsletters

www.InfinityHealth.MD/documents

Infinity Health is a Direct Primary Care practice developed by Dr. Hanson. Dr. Hanson has been in medical practice since 1987 and has been a solo practitioner since 1990 in the conventional insurance-based model.

The concept of dealing or contracting directly with the patient is a bit of a throwback but it places the relationship where it should be, with the patient. There is no point in Dr. Hanson or our office wasting time interacting with insurance companies unless it directly contributes to your health. Instead we developed a medical home which has its focus on the patient's health regardless of their insurance status. Infinity Health is a product of Dr. Hanson and is not affiliated with any other organization. We are a membership-based practice. Direct Primary Care is not the same as typical "Concierge" practices which charge a fee AND bill your insurance company.

Dr. Hanson is Board Certified by the American Board of Family Medicine, a Fellow in the American Academy of Family Physicians and a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. He completed his recertification process in April 2016.

USPSTF CORNER: GLUCOSE

Diabetes is obviously a real problem. We have no need to justify that conclusion. So how do you know if you have it? The answer is not real clear. Certain ranges of your blood glucose are normal, some a way abnormal (diabetes) and some are a little high but not diabetic range (pre-diabetes or impaired glucose tolerance). In a previous newsletter I described measuring hemoglobin A1c as another diabetes test. The main test however is still the blood glucose level. No matter how much you eat it should always be under 140. Fasting glucoses (empty stomach for 10 hours) should be at or below 100. We can check by blood draw or fingerstick. It is not important to know the exact numbers as those



Glucose Molecule

change periodically with various guidelines. If a test is borderline we can always recheck it later and see if there is a trend. Since diabetes is an important illness it begs the questions:
So should everyone get a glucose blood test?
Should everyone be screened for diabetes?
As of this month the USPSTF recommends that we only screen (test) people between the ages of 40 and 70 who are also

overweight. We pointed out early that you don't have to have extra fat to have diabetes but those are the folks we typically see it in.

The USPSTF is NOT saying don't screen other people. It's just that the evidence is not there to suggest it for all. I do check glucose levels with my annual routine blood work on all my patients regardless of age or weight.

The U. S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) is an expert panel which reviews the current evidence to help us docs recommend counseling, medical screenings and preventive medications. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.