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Trexin Health Economics Series

Sustainable Health – A Closed Loop Community Approach

Health is Wealth

For most of this young decade, we have debated as a nation the pros and cons of the US healthcare system and ways to fix it. There are several innovative programs that are being incubated across the country. Even with all that, I believe there is an opportunity, at the grass roots level, to engage our communities in a meaningful way to improve health.

Healthcare costs are climbing and governments across the world are looking to find a way to help build healthier communities. Informed citizens realize that is the only sustainable way to stop healthcare costs from eating into key government services from social safety nets to emergency services to infrastructure services.

Building healthier communities is a grass roots effort that depends on individual, family and neighborhood initiative. This effort can be successful as we create a “closed loop” health community that includes physicians, community leaders, local government administrations and park districts as well as restaurants, retailers, schools and health clubs.

The American Heart Association and American Stroke Association have together come up with a “Life’s Simple 7” program based on latest medical science—our habits, it turns out, determine our destiny more than our DNA.

Recent experience has shown that individual health is sustainably improved in an engaged community. Leading employee communities across the country are showing the way. No matter whether your community is work-based, student-based, location-based, or faith-based, improving community health is a local project and one that requires leadership.

“The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems.”
– Mahatma Gandhi

Our communities have existing capacities that can be coalesced to improve community health. “No kidding!” you say, “Then why aren’t we making more progress?”

It is because not enough of us are catalyzing these initiatives in our communities and engaging in our own neighborhoods. You can encourage your local leaders to provide leadership; ask your local government to incorporate public health and nutrition education into what they do; demand healthier options from your local retailers and restaurants and set an example in your own home.

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