



living **WELL** aware™

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Living WELL Aware

Winter 2014 Newsletter

*The Best in Wellness
Information, Implementation, & Inspiration*

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State of Health in the United States

In January of each year, the President of the United States has his State of the Union address to the American people where he gives his viewpoint on where the country is now, where it's headed, and what he thinks needs to be done. In this newsletter, I'd like to do a sort of State of Health in the United States today. While some of the facts are quite sobering, the good news is that I believe we can halt this epidemic of self-induced disease if we are Living WELL Aware.

Facts:

Despite all the conveniences we have at home and at work and despite countless life-saving advances in medicine from improved diagnostic testing to miracle medications to surgical wonders, our waiting rooms are filled with patients who are not healthy, not happy, and even depressed, often with numerous self-inflicted medical conditions. Many are complicating their lives and harming their well-being with numerous unhealthy behaviors including a sedentary lifestyle, dietary indiscretion, tobacco use, drug abuse, and self-induced stress often leading to anxiety and depression. These health risk behaviors can lead to cardiovascular disease, the #1 killer of Americans. Here are some facts released by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and other medical research that should alarm all of us:

- The majority of deaths (over 70%) in adolescents and young adults ages 10-24 are due to accidents, murder and suicide.
- The death rates for ages 25-34 **increased** in 2011.
- The suicide rate for ages 35-64 **increased** 30% over the last few years.
- In 2013, the CDC announced that there is a "Painkiller Epidemic Among

Women" with almost one million emergency department visits by women for drug misuse and abuse.

- There are now more deaths in the U.S. from drug overdoses than from motor vehicle accidents.
- Obesity is an epidemic with two-thirds of the U.S. population overweight and one-third obese increasing risks for multiple health problems including diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, degenerative joint disease, and even some cancers.

If the healthcare profession is responsible for the health of the country, it looks like we are flunking. The truth is healthcare professionals are often not good examples of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The majority in the healthcare industry do not eat a healthy diet or follow the recommendations for physical activity. Most would not call their lives "stress free." The bottom line: Is the healthcare profession "responsible" for our health and happiness? Or, as I state in the book that I just completed on the Eleven Essential Elements to Health and Happiness: Should You Fire Your Doctor?

The answer: **I'm responsible for my health and happiness, NOT my doctor.** It's my job to **Invest** in the best **Information** on disease prevention, **Implementation** of this information, and the **Inspiration** to make lasting changes. Healthcare providers including dedicated doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants along with the many nurses and other ancillary medical professionals are only a small part of our wellness armamentarium. As a practicing physician, I don't have hours with each patient to go over all the numerous preventable causes of death and disability along with the 23 recommendations on healthy eating by the USDA, the details of the Mediterranean Diet which have been proven to decrease numerous health disorders, the physical activity guidelines for prevention of chronic disease and obesity, and, last but definitely not least, the many ways we can stifle stress and stop the emotional suffering in our lives. Healthcare professionals don't have the time, and unfortunately, often do not have the expertise in wellness to give us all the scientific facts on what constitutes a healthy lifestyle that can prevent early death and disability.

Yes, our healthcare providers can give us important health information, suggestions on how to implement the information, and even inspiration to make it happen. But, it's up to us. I can't say it enough times: **WE need to continually Invest in wellness Information, Implementation and Inspiration.** Even as healthcare professionals, my physician husband and I attend wellness conferences each year so WE can get to that next level of health and happiness: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We just attended a day-long event last month that focused on emotional health with key elements to decrease stress, anxiety and worry. We are able to incorporate this information into our own lives and into the Living WELL Aware conferences.

Let's Face It:

The only way we can maximize our health and happiness is to **make our health a priority** in our lives. I can spend a small percentage of my time and minimal

money now on accumulating the latest proven health information and ways to implement it into my life, or I can be miserable with self-induced health disorders and spend a tremendous amount of time and money going to numerous clinic visits, taking over the counter supplements and prescription medications, and having hospitalizations and surgical procedures which might all have been avoided or at least minimized with a healthy lifestyle. I'm not saying we can avoid all diseases, medications, and surgeries. I am saying that most causes of early death and disability in the U.S. are preventable by implementing habits of health and getting rid of habits of harm. We can also deal with unavoidable health problems more effectively if we are physically, emotionally and spiritually at our best.

What's the problem today? It's a Culture War! If we buy into the current unhealthy food consumption, sedentary lifestyle, over spending, and stress filled thinking, we find ourselves not healthy and not happy. We may also find ourselves in one of the factoids I listed at the beginning of this newsletter.

WARNING: "Wellness" is a multi-billion dollar industry. Billions of dollars are spent annually on herbs, supplements, vitamins, minerals, and other "health" products, all with convincing ads telling you how they can cure anything and everything that ails us, with no harmful effects. Unfortunately, most of these health "claims" are not backed by published data in respected medical journals.

What IS healthy?:

That's what Living WELL Aware is all about. It's about knowing the common causes of disability and death and what we can do prevent or delay them. If we smoke, consume unhealthy or too much food, overindulge in alcohol, have a drug problem, or have some other addiction or bad habit, we need to Seek and Secure Support. Get Help! You are not alone. Most do not have true "addictions", but we all have harmful habits that need to be halted. Maybe it's too much Internet surfing, TV, or Facebook, rather than taking those minutes to work out or go for a walk. Or buying things that are not essential and having the credit card bills add up leading to all sorts of emotional and family problems. Or worrying about things that we have no control over - - or that are not our business! We are ALL doing something that if we modified or eliminated, we would be healthier and happier. What do YOU need to work on? One of the goals of LWA conferences is to help attendees Passionately Pursue Purpose and Priorities ultimately developing habits to get one healthier and dumping habits that ultimately lead to harm.

I hope this State of Health newsletter has given you important health Information, suggestions on Implementation, and a dose of Inspiration to motivate you to make health a higher priority in your daily routine. I hope to see many of you at a future Living WELL Aware conference. The next event is scheduled in the Dallas area on Friday March 21 with an amazing line up of healthcare speakers presenting the latest in Information, Implementation and Inspiration to get us all to the next level of physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Check out www.livingwellaware.com. And stay tuned. My book discussing the Eleven Essential Elements to Health and Happiness will be out soon! Also, the website is

being updated with the inclusion of health information and the Partner with Your Provider worksheet. Let's make Living WELL Aware a priority in 2014!

Patricia J Sulak MD
Founder, Living WELL Aware

Living WELL Aware is an interactive, medically accurate wellness conference designed to get YOU to the next level of health & happiness.

Next Event:
Grand Prairie, TX
Friday, March 21, 2014 | 9am-4pm
*Save \$10 on registration with Promo Code: **LWA032014**.
Hurry! Offer expires 03/1/2014.*

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