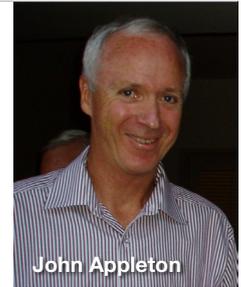


I have been writing articles on topics related to our health for a number of years and in Channel I keep you up to date on ways in which we might improve our health by becoming more aware of the many options that are available to us.



Our Health System – Some New Thinking Required? As I see it - by John Appleton

In the recent budget we were advised that a further 2.2 billion dollars was being allocated to health. This will take the total to approx \$16.2 billion per annum or \$45 million every day. While additional expenditure is necessary as our population increases the question should be asked; is the money we are using to fund our health system really improving the overall health of New Zealanders? Regardless of what spend we seem to have an ever increasing number of sick people. Hospitals which in an ideal world should be for trauma patients are being used more and more for treating the end stage of chronic illness.

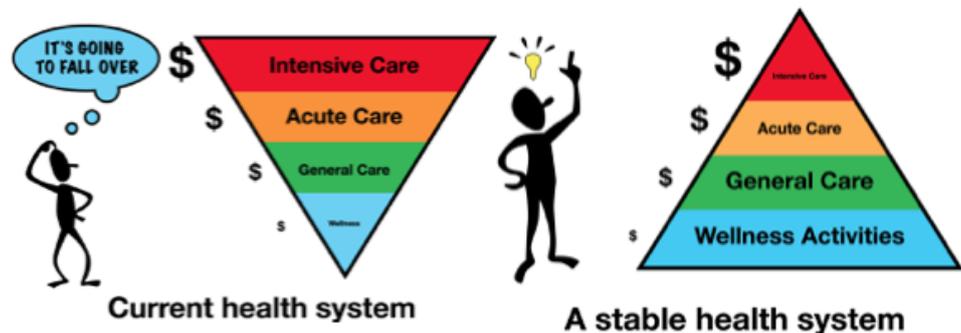
Any sage observer could be forgiven for wondering if it is our health system itself that is sick. Quite plainly if our objective, by spending \$45 million every day, is to have a healthier nation, the statistics certainly don't suggest that we are even close to achieving this. The problem is that instead of promoting health and everything that is involved with keeping people out of the health system, we keep pouring money into the treatment of sickness.

As many a Grandma said 'an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure'. Currently we are spending nearly \$16 billion + on the 'treatment' side of the ledger and almost nothing on prevention. Rather than a healthcare system, what we have is in reality a disease care system.

If we keep looking in the wrong place it's unlikely we will ever find what we are looking for. When it comes to finding "cures" it's very difficult to imagine how any drug will "trump" the impact of environmental toxins, chemical exposures, poor food choices and lack of exercise. The goal of having a healthier nation will continue to elude us until we implement preventive measures and we give people the freedom to choose the type of healthcare that they want. This would necessitate allowing doctors to use treatment options that they believe would achieve the best outcomes for their patients.

The Declaration of Helsinki 1964 (of the World Medical Organisation) states: "It is the mission of the physician to safeguard the health of the people. His or her knowledge and conscience are dedicated to the fulfillment of this mission. A physician must be free to use the most appropriate treatment if in his or her judgment it will result in the alleviation of suffering or the restoration of health or saving the life of the patient."

Imagine if we had easy access to intravenous Vitamin C in hospitals and doctors' surgeries. Imagine if doctors were able to prescribe simple and totally safe nutritional interventions to address high blood pressure, heart rhythm, heart failure, diabetes, arthritis and digestive disorders to name a few.



Imagine if nutrition (the most important consideration when it comes to our health) was the focus of any visit to a doctor. I have read that in China, doctors are paid to keep a patient well. I am not sure how true this is, but it's an interesting concept that could be explored.

Sadly today, doctors who choose to practice along these lines, using their knowledge and skill to find the best way to help a patient, can risk censure by the Medical Council and have their treatments labelled as quackery. The reason for this is that our health system is a state-controlled monopoly, which is solely focused on very costly pharmaceutical interventions. There is absolutely no competition permitted, thus we never get to find out what works and what doesn't.

“The goal of having a healthier nation will continue to elude us until we implement preventive measures and we give people the freedom to choose the type of healthcare that they want.”

In 2012 NZ Herald Journalist Paul Little wrote: "There is much more money to be made from developing and promoting drugs to cure illnesses caused by unhealthy lifestyles than there is to be made from supporting healthy lifestyles. The paradox at the heart of our health system is that the medical industry depends on people being sick. Surgeons, nurses, clinicians and hospitals need sick people to make a living."

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