

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1

Briefly, from your own experience, what do you perceive is the biggest problem in the health system?

- Access to care due to finances. Not all citizens have the luxury of insurance for health care. And of those who have insurance, it may not be adequate to cover the costs of services. The focus in this realm, is seeking care only when it becomes an emergency. Waiting until it becomes an emergency is very costly to the health care system.
- De-emphasis on stress management. Lack of fostering of integrative medicine in in-patient and out-patient settings.
- The biggest problem is that our healthcare system is based on a view of healthcare that is illness-based versus wellness-based, that is reactive instead of proactive, and which fails to take into account the acknowledgement of energy flow and mind-body correlations that are the basis for Eastern/Asian medicine, which still exists from thousands of years ago.
- Access due to financial distress
- Public failure to take responsibility for maintaining healthy lifestyles.
- Lack of education and access to complementary and alternative health care options that could help people avoid entering the traditional medical system in many instances.
- Coordination of care
- cost of care
- quality variations across geography
- low compliance with Evidenced Based Care
- non integrated system
- Insurance companies. Rather than having a focus on wellness and prevention they are focused on profit.
- Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the United States became a signatory in 1948, says that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."
- Excess surgery for orthopedic problems
- It has tunnel vision, is not holistic and lacks adequate female input.
- I am a primary care doctor trying to keep my people healthy and provide comprehensive care. I have been distressed by how many people I see who could live long and happy lives if someone would teach them what to do. I tell them but have no infrastructure to empower them sufficiently.
- System based on "fighting" death - which is no-win and expensive.
- Health Care providers AND consumers taught to look at symptoms as something wrong to be eliminated rather than messages of imbalance to be learned from. It is the nature of the physical body to have symptoms, the majority of symptoms resolve WITHOUT need for medical

intervention. The vast majority of people exposed to a cold virus will not show symptoms...ie our natural tendency is towards health not disease

- Western medical system - Theory and practice - out of balance. The current emphasis on treatment with chemical intervention has left out the wisdom of whole/world medical systems that recognize and incorporate healing effects from relationship, nutrition/botanicals, movement, alignment with source of healing, belief/attitude, contact with natural environment, ART - as way to move through and re-frame loss/trauma.
- It is at its best a disease management system, it is symptom based, and as such views wellness through its own grid. After decades of denial it finally has accepted the role of diet and exercise plays in the health picture. Like the auto industry it has fought tooth and nail against any reforms based outside of its own paradigm. It too often walks hand in hand with big pharma.
- Although there are many Docs open to CAM the medical institution itself is a closed club that reluctantly has been forced to accept modalities like acupuncture. Its primary therapeutic approach is drug based, and as such it tends to exclude wellness models that often ask drugs to take the back seat so that safer methods with fewer side effects can be tried first.
- The biggest problem in our health system is that we do not have a model that emphasizes health promotion and addresses problems before they start. Our system of care is predicated on reaction rather than action, which makes our delivery of health services costly and difficult to sustain.
- As a former hospital administrator, Managed Care executive, Founder of a disease management company and now President and COO of U.S. Preventive Medicine, the biggest problem is the focus on sick care, versus getting in front of the health care issue and solving/preventing the problems through appropriate application of Preventive services and support for individuals, companies and government funded groups.
- A systems approach to engaging an individual in healthy behaviors and choices, supported within a healthy community framework and appropriate rewards to encourage and incentivize healthy behaviors. We have not been focusing on why people make choices they know are bad for them.
- The lack of health care for all
- the lack of integration of credible alternative medicine into the mainstream of care and the perspective of MD's which causes them to distrust and criticize an alternative treatment that has not been through repeated randomized controlled studies. Where as medicine is full of treatment that have had very little research yet it was used through the country for years before it was discovered to be unhelpful. ie angioplasty - med doctors and NIH have a perspective that more technology and better drugs are the answer and they reject anything else - we need to look at dis- ease differently in order to listen to the signs the body gives us to help heal it -
- plus we need to be looking outside the box for ways to create health with a different non medical look at creating health - doctors don't know how to heal us - drugs and surgery are limited methods of treatment after it is too late - natural health care is based on increasing healthy support, reducing toxins to the body, and allowing the body to heal itself. naturopaths

- nutritionists have a different perspective in helping the body heal itself - we don't need to declare a war on a body that is sick and weakened."

- Quality of care. Health care seems to be a business and not a service.
- Doctors do not have office hours when people can come. There are few walk-in clinics. People are forced to visit the emergency room when all they need is a doctor's visit.
- Lack of emphasis on prevention and alternative medicine. Focus on expensive pharmaceuticals with detrimental side effects.
- What happened to the philosophy of "Do No Harm"?
- Current Private business, insurance and government perspectives on investing in prevention and wellness services. Investment is limited because there is no short-term return on investment. In particular, if employees change jobs, etc. There needs to be incentives and reimbursement for nutrition and other wellness services.
- Our current "health care system" is a two-fold oxymoron: 1) it is neither HEALTH care, for it is SICK care with providers waiting for their sick patients to queue up, nor 2) is it a SYSTEM, for there is no good communication within the echelons of medical consultation and provision. The "system" is disorganized and confusing, with healthcare organizations more concerned with the shareholders' health than that of their patients.
- Poor funding for services rendered. CAM services are not reimbursed adequately
- Insufficient affordable health insurance
- Insufficient health screening utilization by those needing it"
- Overemphasis on high tech interventions (those services are more likely to be reimbursed) when 'high touch', integrative, and self-care approaches would be more appropriate.
- First, there is no comprehensive and evidence-based lifestyle program available that empowers people to prevent or reverse chronic conditions through lifestyle changes, i.e., diet, stress management, group support, and exercise; nor is there a program that addresses the underlying causes of lifestyle-related chronic disease conditions, such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancer.
- Secondly, there is little sustained medical, personal, family-centered, community- and health policy-based support to help high risk individuals or individuals with clinical manifestations prevent, halt, or reverse their chronic disease. Though supportive research is available, programs that translate lifestyle research into sustainable action are not available.
- In other words, it is time for each American to adopt an "I can" attitude toward health and wellness by implementing a comprehensive, multi-tiered, lifestyle-based approach that has the power to turn the tide of obesity and related ailments nationwide. This can be done with regional demonstration centers where models are implemented and information and expertise disseminated.
- The biggest problem is access to support and information around healthier lifestyle choices. With an illness oriented model, there is little access to information or support on staying well or returning to health.
- Medications are easy but do not provide a path to wellness.

- We need to see Wellness on a continuum. We need to change the psyche from an illness oriented model dependent on medication to a wellness model.
- The cultural belief is that we are well until diagnosed as ill.
- We need to offer tools and incentives for staying healthy.
- There must be broad community based education programs for both the uninsured and for Insurance companies to offer Wellness Programs with perhaps cost incentives for getting healthy. Even in a universal care plan, those who reach their wellness goals get rewarded...
- Nurse Coaches would serve as educators, advocates and guides.
- We need to see that Prevention is not diagnostic procedures or medications but lifestyle interventions as first line therapy.
- The biggest problem is the lack of emphasis on personal responsibility toward health, with which people would self-educate, self-regulate, and self-determine more willingly and more ably. Personal responsibility in the masses would force the system to invest more in prevention, therapies that provide greater Quality of Life, and more research on the choices of lifestyle and more awareness of healing modalities in the frontier of medical science.
- The single, largest problem is that our healthcare system economically rewards disease treatment rather than disease prevention. Not unlike the subprime mortgage bubble, our "disease bubble" is largely driven by short-term thinking, earnings reports and stock price. Redirecting our system to create future health requires a fundamental paradigm shift in economic drivers.
- It will be challenging to decide which technologies will be most useful especially in light of the fact that many people cannot afford conventional health care or preventive medicine.
- 60-90% of health care visits are in the mind/body and stress realm (anxiety, depression, autoimmune disorders, hypertension). These can be remedied through the Relaxation response, which is costless and can be taught within 3-5 minutes. We now have empiric and genomic data that support mind-body effects. The Relaxation Response Can elicit "remembered wellness" (the placebo effect). Relaxation Response training should be introduced into our education systems so that children learn techniques from early on.
- The primary problem is that we have a sick care system, good at treating end-stage and catastrophic illness. We need a paradigm shift toward getting Americans to believe that we are responsible for our own health; it is not our doctors' responsibility.
- Our system rewards people for being sick. People who are healthy and do preventive self-care practices are "punished" because they take the brunt of costs from those who don't do these things.
- We need a shift from what professionals can do for people towards what people can do for themselves. This has to take place within education system of both kids and in med school. We need to create a rational, economic single-payer health care system. We should bring these two together (i.e., paradigm shift plus single payer system).