
From the Editor's Desk

by: Virginia Kessinger

Healthcare is Evolving—For Better or Worse

I've watched the ever changing healthcare approach for the past fifty-plus years. Many discoveries and advances are miraculous. But, somewhere along the line, some of our basic principles have been lost in the shuffle.

I don't ever remember having a school nurse in my days of elementary education, nor in my children's school days. Looking at group pictures of those times, there were no fat kids. Well, maybe one who actually had a legitimate health condition. Type II Diabetes in children was unheard of. In our current healthcare, children are lined up twice daily down the halls outside the school nurse station to receive their medications. Kids didn't used to require drugs! When did it become the norm to dispense drugs to our children on a daily basis? When did the right for teachers to require children to be on Ritalin become acceptable? Who is in control? Certainly not the parents.

I wonder when it became routine to accept a diagnosis of acid reflux *disease*. When did heartburn, from eating a poor diet, turn into a popular disease? Larry the Cable Guy advises everyone to take a pill before you eat junk food. The healthy concept of eating a healthy diet and exercising is "old school!"

Television advertisements try my patience. I wonder how many viewers are taken in by the beautiful people in the commercials. The ads use the first 15 seconds to brag about what a medication helps and the remainder of the ad time listing all the adverse side effects. This last portion of the ad is done in a monotone voice by the smiling actor/actress. Lately, I have been noticing the beautiful, young lady telling everyone how wonderful the tiny, convenient, disposable catheters are, which makes me wonder:

If most young people are that unhealthy?

If medical procedures or medications are wrecking everyone's kidneys?

Or— Is it just another advertising campaign?

In our clinic, we strive to educate our patients to take control of their health issues. If someone tells them to take a pill, undergo surgery, or accept an invasive procedure that may have serious consequences, they need to do their own research. We encourage them to ask questions:

What are long term side effects?

Will the pill save you from osteoporosis, but have cancer as a side effect!

What percentage of these procedures or surgeries are successful?

If a procedure has 3% side effects (death), it is 100% if it is you or a loved one!

Our older patients have been trained over the years to do as their doctor says and ask no questions. They fear making their doctor mad. If they dare to ask, they may be dismissed as a patient! My answer for that is, "If you went to a new doctor every day for the rest of your life, you would not run out of options. When you go to a doctor, you are hiring them to do a job for you. You are the boss and you are paying them for their expert advice. If you ask a question, they owe you an answer. This should not be a problem for a competent physician. After all, you have entrusted your most valuable possession to them... your life!"

I believe alternative health care doctors are the answer. They approach their patient care conservatively. Most realize that, "patients are not born with a deficiency of drugs or too many parts" (a direct quote from Dr. Jack Kessinger).

Medicine will save your life but it will never make you healthy. We owe that explanation to the patients we have the privilege to treat. When we have helped them accept this concept, we have served them well.

What's that phrase?

First, do no harm!

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