

Submitted by: Marianne Carter

Date: 11/13/2017

Feedback on The Road to Value:

I applaud many of the concepts outlined in the “Road to Value.” Reforming our payment system, increasing efficiency and incentivizing doctors for providing better care are all excellent ideas that will help reign in healthcare costs. However, I don’t see or hear a lot about prevention in the plan. If we’re ever going to get a handle on healthcare costs, we need to work towards preventing the behavior-based illnesses that are eating up our healthcare dollars.

Prevention pays – it may not be in the next 3-5 years, but if we can address obesity and physical inactivity in our state, we will save enormous amounts of money down the road. Our rates of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and even certain forms of cancer will decrease significantly. Perhaps even more so (or just as much) as the reduction from changing administrative policies.

We need to invest money and resources into getting Delawareans to adopt healthier lifestyle habits. We’ve made great strides in reducing tobacco use, but much of that was because we devoted resources to education, services and social marketing. We’ve invested little effort in tackling obesity, despite the fact that it’s predicted that obesity and inactivity will surpass smoking as a cancer cause. Sadly, only a very small percentage of the SIM grant is going towards “Healthy Neighborhoods.”

I understand the need to focus on “special populations” – the ones costing the state the most money. However, from the meetings I’ve attended, it’s clear that healthcare costs for state employees are eating up a large portion of our dollars. So, why are we not increasing our efforts to work with this population? Instead, the DelaWELL program has gone by the wayside, and “wellness” has been left up to the insurance companies. As a state employee, and someone that has worked in the field of wellness, I can confirm that this approach isn’t working. I also feel that physicians are already time challenged; is it realistic to expect they will have the time to talk with their patients about lifestyle habits?

If you really want Delawareans to embrace healthier habits, you need to create a statewide effort championed by Governor Carney. Delaware is a small state; it’s not unthinkable to involve representatives from government, healthcare, academia, transportation, worksites, insurance companies, restaurants, faith-based organizations, neighborhoods, families, and

individuals to formulate a plan to get Delawareans moving and eating healthier. Currently, there's not even a Governor's Council on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Delaware. It would also be prudent to support the Delaware Coalition for Healthy Eating and Active Living (DE-HEAL). They can expand DPH's efforts to make policy and environmental changes to improve Delaware's health.

There are a LOT of things we can do to make the healthier choice the easy choice. Without a concerted statewide effort, though, I fear that individuals will continue to be inactive, overeat and develop chronic, costly behavior-based diseases.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Carter

Marianne Carter, MS, RD

DE Center for Health Promotion
DE State University - Room 107 WRC
1200 N. DuPont Highway
Dover, Delaware 19901
ph-302-857-7309