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Tampa Matters!

By Cyril Spiro, MD, MBA

- Your Tampa City Council Candidate

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Go to the Gym and Save Money!

The U.S. dominated Rio's Olympics! USA! USA! This summer we saw the benefits of fitness. And, it's not just elite level athletes that benefit from fitness. We can too!

When you read the title of this column, you might have asked how you could save money if you spend money at the gym. The answer is that it's just like spending money to purchase a home. It's a long-term investment that can be used for your retirement. So invest in your long-term health and go to the gym so that you can enjoy that retirement!

This year, the City of Tampa's healthcare expenses are expected to rise another 11%, reaching \$56M and marking the 3rd year of rising city employee healthcare costs since 2012. At the Mayor's presentation of the 2017 Budget to City Council, he said that due to rising costs, healthcare insurance for city employees may need to be outsourced. But, this problem is avoidable. Would you believe that 86% of the nation's healthcare costs can be attributed to chronic illnesses (www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease) that can be avoided by eating, sleeping and exercising properly, while avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol consumption?

During my medical training, I saw this first hand. When I was completing my operating room rotations, day in and day out in the OR, I couldn't help but notice that a disproportionate number of the patients scheduled for non-elective surgery were medically overweight. It wasn't a scientific study, just my personal observation. However, it is logical because the long-term effects of being overweight include high cholesterol levels, blood pressure, and blood sugar as well as hip, knee and back strain. These conditions lead to type 2 diabetes, heart attacks, strokes and chronic pain which can result in loss of vision and sensation, falls and lack of mobility. Often, next is the use of chronic pain medicine and weight gain, which was the cause of the problem to begin with. At this point, a person's quality of life is in a downward spiral.

It's an avoidable lose-lose situation. Not only do we suffer more, but we pay more in taxes for healthcare because we pay more for one another to live a lower quality of life. And, we don't have to. We can eat less while increasing fruits and vegetables and exercise. We can stop the downward cycle and go to the gym.

When I say go to the gym and save money, I mean it. Take this magazine to your local Shapes, Crunch or L.A. Fitness by Sept. 15th and show them this column and you'll get a discount on your new membership!



Paid by Cyril Spiro for Tampa City Council District 7



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