

## WINTER 2012/2013 NEWSLETTER

Steven E. Reznick, M.D. FACP

7280 W. Palmetto Park Rd., Suite 205 N, Boca Raton, FL 33433

561-368-0191 or email [DrR@BocaConciergeDoc.com](mailto:DrR@BocaConciergeDoc.com)

### How Will Doctors Handle the Flood of Newly Insured Patients?



Albert Fuchs, MD noted in the online journal *Medpage* that in 2014 thirty million new patients will have health care insurance and will be seeking a doctor. This will result from the institution of the Affordable Care Act passed in March of 2010. Dr. Fuchs observes that there is a dramatic shortage of physicians to care for this increased patient load especially in the areas of general internal medicine, family practice and pediatrics. He cites a study by the medical malpractice insurance company, The Doctors Company, which polled 5,000 physicians about the influx of new patients under the new law. Sixty

percent of the respondents said the large influx would “hurt the level of care they provide.” Forty-three percent said they will retire in the next five years. Nine out of 10 respondents said they would not encourage anyone they knew to enter the field of medicine.

*Medical Economics* published an article in which it said patients should not expect to see a physician. They accurately stated that medical schools cannot possibly produce the number of additional physicians needed in the time allotted. Nurse practitioners will be elevated in the national healthcare dialogue. They cited the Massachusetts experience in which many primary care doctors have closed their practices to new patients. An opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* predicted the closing of practices to new patients as well.

It is clear that your next “doctor” may be a nurse. I have advised my younger family members to find themselves a good primary care physician. I recommend someone who is board certified or eligible in the specialty they are practicing. I also recommend that the physician follows you into the hospital if you require inpatient care, as opposed to turning your care over to a hospital based physician. If post-hospital care is required, it’s preferred that your doctor will go to your rehab facility to provide care and continuity. You should also seek a physician who provides same day appointments, when you are ill, and someone who is available and returns phone calls and emails and text messages the same day.

The *Wall Street Journal* predicted the growth of concierge medicine where patients pay an annual membership fee in exchange for a doctor being accessible. The cost is about the same as a cup of coffee per day, at most nationally recognized coffee chains, and in many instances is less than one’s monthly cable TV bill.

Let’s face it, your health, which has a **direct impact on your quality of life**, is a much wiser investment than a daily *double chocolate chip frapuccino* or 489 cable television channels.



### **\$300 Discount**

**Receive a \$300 discount off of your next annual membership fee simply  
by referring someone who joins the practice.**

## How Long Do Prescription Drugs Last?



In a letter to the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Lee Cantrell, PharmD of the California Poison Control System in San Diego, discussed his research that showed that many prescription medications and their main ingredients retain their effectiveness and potency 40 years after the expiration date. He and his group specifically looked at aspirin, butalbital, phenacetin, caffeine, phenobarbital, homatropine, chlorpheniramine and acetaminophen. Of the 14 compounds analyzed, 12 retained the generally recognized minimal acceptable potency of 90% of the labeled amount almost 40 years after they had reached the expiration date. Out of the 14 compounds, Aspirin and amphetamine were the only 2 that didn't retain their effectiveness some 336 months beyond the expiration date.

The authors did not advocate relying on outdated and expired pharmaceuticals. They did see a cost savings in re-defining how long a product will last and remain effective when stored appropriately. This could save consumers thousands of dollars each year if they store their prescription drugs in the correct environment.

I will certainly not advise my patients to use significantly outdated and expired prescriptions. The study shows that, under emergency conditions, these specific outdated compounds still maintain their efficacy.

Their research did not answer questions about the multitude of newer drugs that have been developed over the last 40 years and how long they will last. Nor did not address the question of whether over time any new chemicals developed within the 40 year old products that may be harmful. The research certainly did raise the question of why we need to look at the traditional expiration dates and reassess the length of time a product still is safe and of value to the consumer.

## Three More Strikes Against Smoking



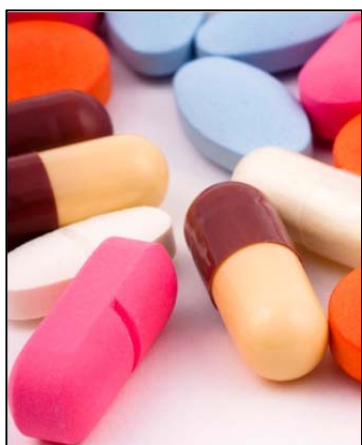
There is no doubt that cigarette smoking is a practice that contributes to poor health and earlier death. Despite this, the practice is still popular among the young. Over the last three weeks several new research articles have been published that support the concept that smoking is severely detrimental to your health.

An Australian study published in *Stroke: Journal of the American Stroke Association* pointed out that individuals who had a stroke at the time they were active smokers had a far worse outcome and long term outcome than non- smokers. It additionally showed that smokers had the stroke at a younger age than nonsmokers. The group was followed for another 10 years and had a higher incidence of strokes, heart attacks and deaths than the nonsmoking group. The study emphasized the devastation and cost of "healthy years of life lost" as a consequence of continuing to smoke.

In an online publication in the *Lancet*, researchers working in the “Great Britain Million Women Study” noted that women who quit smoking lived longer than women who continued - irrespective of the age they decided to stop smoking. They additionally lowered their chances of dying from lung cancer.

A study out of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota looked at the effect of indoor smoking bans on heart attack rates in a community. This study looked at the effect of secondhand smoke on individuals. The Mayo Clinic has an exhaustive and large data base of individuals in the Midwest who have come to their clinic for health care for generations. They believe that in their study population, the number and extent of cardiovascular risk factors has remained fairly constant but, since the institution of strict bans on indoor smoking, the number of heart attacks has dropped dramatically.

### Multivitamins in the Prevention of Cancer in Men



Vitamin, mineral and supplement use in the United States is a multi-billion dollar industry. Despite many testimonials extolling the benefits of supplemental vitamins, there has been very little research that actually provides evidence that these supplements are beneficial. However, there is abundant evidence that over consumption of the fat soluble vitamins, A, E, D and K results in accumulation of the substances and eventual toxicity. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans says, “For the general, healthy population, there is no evidence to support a recommendation for the uses of multivitamin or mineral supplements in the primary prevention of chronic disease.”

The Physicians Health Study II (PHS II), a randomized controlled study, followed 14,641 male U.S. patients initially aged 50 or older for a median of 11.2 years. Their results showed that “daily multivitamin supplementation modestly but significantly reduced the risk of total cancer.” The study could not clarify or specifically define which nutrient or nutrients in their supplemental multivitamin were responsible for the effect in reducing cancer.

The study used the multivitamin Centrum Silver. However, it did not examine the effect of multivitamins in women. Nor, did it allow participants to consume additional vitamins, minerals, supplements or herbs.

The message to individuals is clear. Eat a healthy and balanced diet that is prepared in a manner that does not destroy the nutrients. A multivitamin such as Centrum Silver will reduce your risk of cancer minimally. There is no proof that taking additional products with the multivitamin will have a more positive effect.

### Happy Holidays – New Year’s Resolutions



This is the time of the year for joy and celebration but we should all also take time for reflection and set goals for improvement and change in the coming year. The improvement of lifestyle habits can include smoking cessation, exercise pattern changes and weight reduction. I am available to discuss options for success with you and how you can safely incorporate positive change into your lifestyle without exacerbating any existing medical problems. Please set up an appointment to discuss your options for success. I wish you all the best of health and luck in the New Year.

## Florida's New Chronic Pain Management Law and You

Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Hillsborough Counties had thousands of "pain clinics" responsible for the majority of the illegal and illicit pain pill traffic in the United States until recently. The use and abuse of prescription medications led to countless deaths due to overdoses, drug interactions and motor vehicle accidents. New laws passed by the Florida Legislature, instituted on January 2, 2012, have all but eliminated the illegal pain clinics. The laws define chronic pain prescribing as *the prescribing of a controlled substance for a problem for a period longer than 90 days*. Medical doctors who choose to prescribe a pain medicine such as Vicodin or Tramadol for more than 90 days must register with the State at the time of renewing their license. Failure to comply with the law carries a mandatory six month suspension of your medical license, and ability to practice, plus a fine of \$10,000 per prescription written. **To be in compliance, a Florida physician must perform a complete medical history and exam and document the need for pain medication. An individualized treatment plan must be developed and agreed upon. A written controlled substance agreement or pain contract between the physician and patient must be created which defines the reasons for drug therapy and under what circumstances the drugs may be discontinued.** The contract specifies that the controlled substance will be supplied by one physician only and filled at one pharmacy only. Regular follow up appointments every three months must be scheduled and kept. Referral to fellowship trained pain management specialists is encouraged for problems.

Our office is complying with the law. A pain contract has been obtained from the State of Florida and will be presented to patients for review and signature. **This is the law. It not something I am instituting.** Patients unwilling to follow the State's guidelines will not receive pain medication. Please contact me with any questions.

Steven E. Reznick, M.D., FACP  
7280 W. Palmetto Park Rd., #205N  
Boca Raton, FL 33441  
561-368-0191  
[www.BocaConcierge Doc.com](http://www.BocaConciergeDoc.com)