

CAN YOU AFFORD ALTERNATIVE HEALTHCARE?

The other day a mother visited my office with her son who had an upper respiratory infection. At the end of the visit this young mom, who not long ago was much less confident that homeopathic medicine was the right path for her family, gave me an unexpected gift. She told me how much healthier her children were now compared to before they were treated with homeopathy. The boy's classmates and friends had been sick more often and needed antibiotics for their illnesses while her son frequently remained healthy despite the latest school epidemic. His colds and coughs were milder and he recovered more often than not without any treatment.

The greatest benefit of homeopathy is better health – not just through safer medicines but by improving resistance. Another benefit that may not be so obvious is that better health means fewer trips to the doctor, fewer drugs and less money spent on healthcare. These days finding ways to save money gets everyone's attention.

The initial homeopathic visit is longer and more detailed than subsequent visits. The higher cost of this visit may delay or prevent some from beginning treatment. But there are ways to pay the up front costs. Most insurance plans cover my visits as an outpatient doctor visit -with the exception of HMO plans. **Health savings accounts** will defer costs by allowing money spent on medical visits to be paid with pretax dollars – thus saving money on taxes. Health savings accounts or flexible spending accounts can be added to many high deductible health plans. Check with your employer or directly with your insurance company to find out if your plan is compatible.

Significant improvement in patients with recurring illnesses treated by homeopathy can be seen after about a year. Children generally respond more quickly. Office visits are less frequent, illnesses less intense and recovery more rapid. A patient is truly healthy when their own body takes care of a health problem efficiently, quickly and without lasting complications. The last step is when a person can do this without the help of medication or a physician.

When I am most successful my patients no longer need my assistance. Becoming and staying healthy is the best way to keep healthcare costs down. And that is a health plan we can all live with.

Dr. Martens is a family physician specializing in natural medicine and homeopathy in Wheaton. For more information or to make an appointment, call (630) 668-5595.