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KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

A close friend emailed me the other day that he had had some significant health issues, and was counseling all his friends to listen to their own bodies and take care of themselves. My friend, a retired colonel like me, travels extensively all over the country doing volunteer work. I think that is why his message hit me hard! I too, travel frequently and on many occasions, don't always pay attention to the aches and pains that come with getting older. My friend was slated to travel cross country. Just before he was ready to leave his house he felt as if someone was sitting on his chest. Less than an hour later, he was in a cardiac care unit near his home in Virginia and not on a plane headed to Colorado. During his hospital stay, my friend replayed the "What if's?" The bottom line of his message was. "If you don't feel right, don't push your luck! Listen to your body and take care of yourself."

The older I get, the more I hear the "Don't push your luck" message replaying in my brain. I think back to my father's words, and the number one lesson I learned growing up. You have to be able to take care of yourself, and your health is the single most important thing one can control. At times, I think we all tend to push our own safety, but more and more, the older I get, I realize that you have to take care of yourself first. Whether it's going to the gym, taking a walk, monitoring you blood pressure, or seeing the doctor about a persistent health problem, a person is their own best primary care giver.

Because health is such a personal living condition, the health care we need is something that shouldn't be overlooked or left to somebody else. Anyone who hasn't looked at the health contingencies for their own personal state of well being is foolish. Relying on someone else to handle your families' health care issues is irresponsible. Letting employers, the government, nonprofit agencies, or emergency rooms take the choice out of your personal health decisions have potentially grave consequences. Moreover, these past four Obama care years have limited health care choices for many of our local residents, and put quality health care in jeopardy in this remote rural area of California.

Most people fail to recognize that health insurance is not health care. Health care is that provider to patient hands on...."this is what is wrong with you and this is how we can fix it".... face to face contact.

More and more in this area, I hear about care givers dropping out of the provider pool. Many care givers will no long accept the health insurance coverage's available in this area because of the associated bureaucracies, complicated reimbursement processes, and structured compensations for rendered services.

Ever since the email from my Virginia friend, I have been encouraging people to ask themselves the tough questions about their personal medical contingencies and care. Clearly, we need to prepare ourselves by answering these questions and listen honestly to what our aging bodies are telling us. Our health is really our personal responsibility! Health coverage won't save your life..... a doctor can!

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