

KINS COMMUNITY COMMENT (442-5744)

This is Ron Pierre for Community Comment.

I was standing in line in the grocery store the other day. In front of me was a young lady waiting to pay for a candy bar. She was accompanied by her mother who turned to her daughter and said, "You have to pay for that with your own money." The young lady opened a her purse and started to count out the coins she had. During her coin inventory, she realized she couldn't pay for the candy . No matter how many times she counted the coins, she just couldn't make the necessary total. She put the candy back on the shelf and left the store with her mom.

We all inventory status of our cash, food in the pantry, and the necessities of living on a regular basis. Over the past few months, I have taking a keen interest in my personal health. About eight months ago during one of these physical condition status checks, I realized I needed to get my act together. Aside from getting older, the aging process was talking a toll on me. I weighed too much, ate too much, and didn't pay attention to those wellness indicators that defined the overall state of my health. In addition, I looked at the area we live in and the availability of sustainable good quality health care. I looked at the decreasing number of available primary care providers, specialty care givers, hospital accessibility, medial referrals, health care transportation assets, and affordability. When I looked back at the multiplicity of health care assets in this area just five years ago, and then compared those factors then with the factors of 2015, I was truly shocked. We have lost a significant number of community health care providers. These losses have come in bits and pieces, but they are never-the-less a reality of this rural region in 2015.

I picked up the newspaper the other day and read the lead headlines about the loss of long term care facilities in this area. Couple these health care take a ways with a decrease in mental health resources, viable veteran's care, and trauma facilities; and it seems like this community is caught in medical care quicksand. You don't have to accept my personal health inventory, do one for yourself. Look at a couple of contingencies like a heart attack, hip replacement, major surgery or catastrophic illness. Be honest, the last five years have seen fewer and fewer resources at greater costs.

We do not live in a population center where many of the quality medical resources are available. The exodus of rural doctors, and the inability to recruit new care givers exacerbates the deteriorating condition brought on by the affordable care act.

As you do your own health inventory, look at who gives you medical care. If you lose your primary care provider, do you have just an insurance program without a doctor? Moreover, what will you do for referral services, if your health status changes?

Going back to the young lady in the grocery store who walked away after an honest inventory of her fiscal assets.... If you haven't done a medical care inventory based on your needs you may need to walk away from the tightrope you are walking.

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