

# HSA Healthline

November 2008

## CEO CORNER

### HSAs - A Good Consumer "Choice"

By Lynn Paulson, CEO

What a ride we've been on in the past couple of months with regard to the economic chaos and uncertainty. While this may not be as bad as the 1930s Depression, it is still, none-the-less, historic economic times.

As Choice Financial HSA customers, I want to personally assure you our institution is as safe and sound as it's always been. We're having another very good year. We did not participate in any of the high-risk financial transactions that ended up being the demise of so many Wall Street financial firms that the U.S. taxpayer will ultimately have to help pay for. Having your HSA dollars in Choice Financial may very well be the safest and most prudent place to have your money.



We need to get back to having ourselves be the primary persons responsible for our success or failure. We need to get back to the old school basics of self-reliance and personal independence. We shouldn't believe that our government knows more about what's better for us than we do. HSAs are a great start to this self-sufficiency.

Choice Financial is working on a lot of excellent enhancements in terms of technology and HSA account delivery channels and options. We will provide a more comprehensive update to you on these benefits in early 2009. I think you'll be pleased and impressed with the additional options available to you.

Remember to get out and vote on November 4! Health care reform will be a huge priority for the next President. In a society where about 74 percent of health care claims are attributed to unhealthy lifestyles, there is a huge opportunity for improvements in our health care system.

Another approach could be like what Japan does. According to *Forbes Magazine*, the Japanese government



recently passed legislation requiring everyone between the ages of 40 and 74 (56 million people) to have their waistlines measured regularly. The maximum waistline for men is 33.5 inches. For women, it's 35.3 inches. Those who have waistlines in excess of these maximums will have three months to shape up or undergo "reduction." Those not showing improvement will face fines and penalties. Hmm ...

## Saving Money at the Pharmacy

By Lori Doele, Business Development Officer

Medications continue to rise in price. If you have a chronic illness and take several medications, the costs may become a serious burden. There are ways to save money on medications. Your first step is to speak with your doctor about your financial concerns. Your doctor will be more willing to write a prescription for a generic medication or change your therapy to a less-expensive alternative if your doctor knows that you are concerned about money.

The following are some well-established ways to save money on your medications.

- 1) Generic medications can save you up to 80 percent on the cost of a prescription compared with the brand name drug. Ask your doctor if there is a generic drug available to treat your condition.
- 2) Shop around at pharmacies in your area. Pharmacies often widely vary in what they charge for medications.
- 3) Ask your pharmacy to match the lowest price in the community. If you buy your medication from a local pharmacy and the pharmacist knows you, ask them if they are willing to match the lower prices from another pharmacy in the community. I'm sure your current pharmacy would like to keep you as a loyal customer.
- 4) Shop for generics at national big box retailers. If you take generic drugs you may be able to buy these for \$4 for a 30-day supply or \$10 for a 90-day supply at a large national chain store such as Wal-Mart, Target or Costco.
- 5) Stick to the no-name store brand when

- buying an over-the-counter medication. As with prescription medications, over-the-counter generic drugs are less expensive than their name brand counterparts, and they are safe and effective.
- 6) Learn about pill splitting. Splitting pills can save you money, because drug companies often charge a similar price for varying doses of medication. Check with your pharmacist to see if your medication can be split.
- 7) Ask your doctor to prescribe a cheaper alternative. If there is no generic version of the brand name medication, your doctor may be able to provide you with a less-expensive medication that is different but also treats your condition.



## Supplements: A Healthy Alternative?

By Amanda Rubis, HSA Advisor

Over the years, the debate continues: is there a true benefit to taking nutritional supplements? Studies have produced mixed results, but below are some key things to keep in mind when making your decision:

- 1. Don't become dependent on vitamins and supplements as a substitute for healthy eating habits.** Just because you may be taking a supplement, does not give you permission to skimp on healthy foods in general. Make healthy food choices a habit.
- 2. Try to first seek out foods that contain the nutrients your body is lacking.** If you need to do some re-arranging in your daily diet, it might be worth it. Even small changes could make a difference, such as switching

from white bread to whole wheat bread to increase your fiber intake, or drinking a glass of orange juice with breakfast for Vitamin C.

- 3. Make sure you are not getting too much of a good thing.** If you are taking supplements, keep track of what you actually get in your diet alone. A vitamin in pill form can give you a surprisingly high dose, so read the label carefully and assess how much you actually need.
- 4. If you are unsure ask your doctor or a trained nutritional expert before starting a supplement regimen.** It never hurts to double check.

### Other ways to keep a healthy lifestyle:

- Make sure to get enough sleep. At least seven hours a night are ideal for an

average person to feel refreshed.

- Stay active. Regular exercise is proven to help you sleep better, ward off disease and illness, and help you feel better in general.
- See your doctor regularly. A regular preventive office visit can catch a problem before it escalates.
- Drink at least eight glasses of water daily. Water naturally cleanses your body, gives you energy, and keeps you healthy.

