

# Big Health Questions Are Being Posed

Would you be willing to pay more of your medical bills yourself in exchange for lower insurance premiums?

Or do you think medical costs should be reduced by charging higher insurance premiums to smokers and other people who practice poor health habits?

Those are the kinds of questions that Triangle and Fayetteville area

residents, including those in Warren County, will get to answer in April in a public opinion survey on the rising costs of health care.

The survey, called Health Vote '85, is being sponsored by the Public Agenda Foundation and the North Carolina Foundation for Alternative Health Programs, Inc. in cooperation with a variety of area organizations and institutions.

The survey will take the form of a ballot to be distributed in April in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, Fayetteville and surrounding areas.

Thousands of ballots will be inserted in newspapers and distributed at shopping centers, and no special registration will be required. Citizens will simply vote for the solutions they think can best solve the problem of rising health-care costs.

But before they do, the N.C. Foundation for Alternative Health Programs, Inc. is launching a six-week information campaign.

The Health Vote '85 campaign, which began March 1, will be designed to help people explore the problem of high medical costs and consider the pros and cons of at least a dozen possible solutions.

"Besides health insurance, topics covered may include the use of alternative health-care facilities and non-physician health workers, Medicare, duplication of services and preventive medicine," according to Nan Rideout, vice president of the foundation.

The issues and the ballot questions have been determined by a board of advisors made up of average citizens, community leaders, public health officials, health-care providers and people from civic groups, insurance companies, and health care facilities.

"So often people are suspicious of what they read because they're not sure where it's coming from," Ms. Rideout said. "But in this campaign, they can depend on information that represents all points of view."

There are no statewide figures on the per capita costs of health care in North Carolina, but Rideout said some companies have found the costs to be lower here

than in other states.

"The kicker in that finding," she said, "is that some studies have shown that the rate of increase in medical costs is higher in the Southeast than in many other parts of the country."

Between 1966 and 1978, the United States as a whole averaged an 11.6 percent increase in personal health-care costs, but that average was 12.6 percent in the Southeast and 12.2 percent in North Carolina. Ms. Rideout

said that some companies in the state have seen their medical insurance costs jump as much as 75 percent in a single year.

"We have more to gain by stemming the rapid rate of increase now than by waiting until we get into a crisis, where the absolute level is up with everybody else," she said.

Warren County Health Director Joe Lennon said this week he was encouraged about the possibilities of the campaign.

"It's a good thing," Lennon said. "It's a chance for people to look at what's happening in the area of medical care and to get a handle on why medical costs are so high and who is paying. It will give us an opportunity to look at some alternatives."

For more information about educational resources available to local communities in preparation for Health Vote '85, write to Health Vote '85, P.O. Box 10245, Raleigh, N.C. 27605 or call (919) 821-0491.

In addition to The Warren Record, Health Vote '85 information will be carried during the campaign in the Raleigh and Durham daily newspapers and by Raleigh and Durham television stations.

## How Important Is Dad To Children In Family?

In some areas over 50 percent of the children live in fatherless homes. Many others in all areas of America live without a father. How are these families managing, and how does the lack of a father in the home effect the children?

"Research has shown that a strong bond between father and child helps the child accept responsibility and society's expectations," says Dr. Leo Hawkins, extension human development specialist, North Carolina State University.

"Without a father figure a child is destined to great insecurity and a fear of being able to adventure into society. Without the support and guidance of fathers, children seem to create many social problems. They lack responsibility, don't do as well in school, develop poor work habits and are more likely to take part in crime," the extension specialist says.

There is a mass of evidence showing how the presence of a strong, responsible father helps develop a child's self-esteem, achievement, morals, intellectual growth, work and emotional stability.

"To avoid exaggerating the importance of a father in the family one point needs to be added," Dr. Hawkins says. "Studies of father-absence have shown that women alone do a

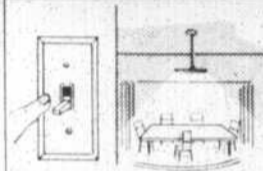
very good job of parenting when they have adequate income, support from her family, friends and community, plus strong emotional health.

"The problem, of course, is that few female-headed one-parent families have these ideal supports. Poverty, alone, is a big enough problem to assure that one-parent families will continue to be a big concern of the American people," the extension specialist concludes.

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