

Cheap drugs could cost you a lot

Here's a really bad idea that's catching on across the country. Illinois and several other states are backing the plan, which offers services in Kansas. Known as I-SaveRx, the program buys common drugs in Europe and Canada and ships them to people here. It claims to save them half the cost.

Great idea. If you don't mind losing your friendly local drug store, and all contact with the one health professional who can protect you from conflicts and problems caused by prescription drugs.

As more and more Americans turn to regular medication — more than 60 percent of us by some estimates — the danger of drug interactions, reactions and side effects grows exponentially.

We've all known someone, maybe a relative or friend, who suffered from drug reactions. It's as common as prescription drugs.

In a system where a doctor prescribes, and a patient fills the prescription by mail or phone order, even e-mail, who's looking out for the patient?

The doctor is too busy. He or she may not know what other doctors have prescribed.

Often times, nursing staff may be too busy to notice. Patients befuddled by drug overdose don't usually know what's happening to them.

In the extreme case, like the arthritis drug Vioxx, people may be having heart attacks and never know the cause.

Taking the pharmacist out of the loop — or making him or her just a cog in an assembly line — is not the answer.

We do need to do something about the high price of medications. If the same drug, produced under the same patent by the same firm in another country, is half as expensive across the border, then something is wrong with the way we regulate the drug business.

The weak link is not your local pharmacy, which charges based on the cost of drugs it pays.

The weak link is farther up the line.

If a drug company can afford to sell the same thing for half price in another country, then we've driven the cost of doing business here way too high.

Congress needs to take a look at U.S. laws with an eye to making drugs more competitive and more affordable. More regulation isn't the answer.

The market is. Changing laws on liability and patents might be part of the solution.

Opening the border to cheaper drugs might help. But let's not do it by killing a local institution.

Our pharmacists are under pressure from mail-order and Internet houses, insurance companies and now state governments. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius got involved in the Canadian drug movement, then wrote a long letter explaining herself to pharmacists statewide.

The answer does not lie in bankrupting our local drug stores. Let's get that straight. We need contact with our pharmacists.

— Steve Haynes

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It's better to be a rescuer than invader

Sometimes I think we forget how wars (or ways of bringing peace) are best waged. It doesn't come from bombs and invasions, but rather from rescue and humanitarian efforts. It doesn't come from preaching in the pulpit, converting through fear, but through food when we are hungry, warmth when we are cold and medicine for our illnesses. People learn by example and when they see a person filled with concern for another's well-being, someone respectful of another's culture, and someone with a determination to help those less fortunate, they want to find where that caring, loving concern is born.

I watch with admiration as our military enters those areas ravaged by the tsunami

Phase II

Mary Kay Woodyard



and I am proud. They have embarked on a mission of life. Young soldiers passing food and water packages from the helicopter to the people on the ground are met with smiles and utterances of thank you in many dialects. Our equipment is used to help rescue, clear and eventually rebuild. We watch as the current president asks two former presidents to head a pri-

ivate fund drive to give direction to individuals who wish to aid the victims of this terrible catastrophe.

Nothing will do more for our world image than to be seen as a rescuer rather than an invader. We must be seen as the nation dedicated to bringing comfort and peace through our humanitarian efforts. We must be seen as the "first responders".

As a nation we profess the teachings of a "man" who never picked up a weapon, never invaded a country, never sought to overwhelm. Rather He stepped forward to feed and clothe, reached out and helped strangers and preached love of everyone. And this one "man's" story has spread and impacted more lives than any other single human being.

Mental, physical health need work

Along with a healthy body, a healthy mind is also important. A person's attitude and emotional health can affect them just as much as their physical condition.

When a person is unhappy and feels reproachful about life, it can be difficult to be enthusiastic and have a positive outlook. This in turn, effects relationships, both at home and work.

Good emotional health takes commitment, just as keeping a health body involves time and effort.

Research shows that people who have a lot of social support and involvement tend to be happier, while those who isolate themselves tend to be unhappier, as well as unhealthier.

Having people involved in one's life is good for mental well-being. At the same

High Plains Mental Health

Karen Beery

time, some isolation can be healthy; everyone should take some time each day for personal reflection, to relax and ease both the body and mind.

It's also important to find pleasure in life; being overly devoted to one's job can affect relationships with family and friends, and as well as add stress to life.

Too many people allow their responsibilities to consume them and end up neglecting their own enjoyment of life.

How a person handles the problems that life throws out certainly has an effect on

emotional health.

Life does not go smoothly for anyone, so it does not pay to worry about everything that might happen if something goes wrong.

Planning ahead for predictable problems is often the best that can be done. And when the going gets rough, getting help from a professional should not be overlooked.

No one makes it through life without some emotional difficulties, some of which can be quite overwhelming. There is psychological help available, so it is not necessary nor is it a good idea to try to deal with life's problems alone.

Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Dept. 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601.

She's snowed in, husband snowed out

What did you do during the recent ice storm/blizzard? My sister called and asked if I was snowed in. "No, but the hubby got snowed out," I said.

A friend suggested he decided to move and didn't tell me. Whatever—I haven't seen him since Monday!

Tricia headed back to school before the storm for an Inter-session class (which has been held only once!). Kate and Elizabeth had to go back, but neither of them has had school.

So things have been pretty lonely. I have to work hard to amuse myself. But, lest you think I am just goofing off, here are some of the very important things I have accomplished.

The hubby and I enjoy watching the bowl games so I bravely carried on. And you had to be brave to watch the Orange Bowl past the first quarter! I was for the Big XII teams in every bowl game but I would like to find my Oklahoma University friend and ask the question, "Where is YOUR National Championship?"

I cleaned out the fridge. There were lots of little odds and ends of food from Christmas. I threw out the leftover cookies and candy. I feel guilty doing that, even though I know keeping stale food isn't

Back Home Nancy Hagman



going to help starving people in Indonesia.

I didn't work on the farm books because everything is on the computer and the electricity might go off and I'd lose all my data. (That's my story and I'm sticking to it!)

I got out my projects and prioritized them. I didn't work on them but I have my priorities straight!

I sorted the VCR tapes.

I re-programmed the speed dial on my phone. That was pretty tricky because I couldn't find the directions. But it needed to be done. I had a phone number for a friend who moved about six years ago. And the junior high number was on there even though I haven't had a kid in junior high for almost five years. I decided to add some numbers: my

beautician and my bank. I'm not sure what that says about me: Does it take bank financing to go to the beauty shop?

I have some important responsibilities - I feed the pets. I even had to brave the weather (without a winter coat) and go to town and get them some more food.

This was a major winter storm and as I watched the weather channel and talked to friends I realized, rather than developing cabin fever, I needed to be grateful.

I am grateful the hubby is safe and warm and that we have phones that are dependable and allow us to let others know we are safe and warm! I am glad we have cell phones so we can let others know if we aren't safe.

I am grateful for weather radar and all the weather prediction advances. I am glad our electricity did not go off and we didn't lose any trees.

I am glad I don't have to be out on the roads or working and I am grateful to the people who are.

STILL, I hope this weather clears out soon. It just makes everything so difficult. And although I still maintain I haven't been goofing off I may get goofy (or goofier) if I don't have some human contact soon!