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Crete

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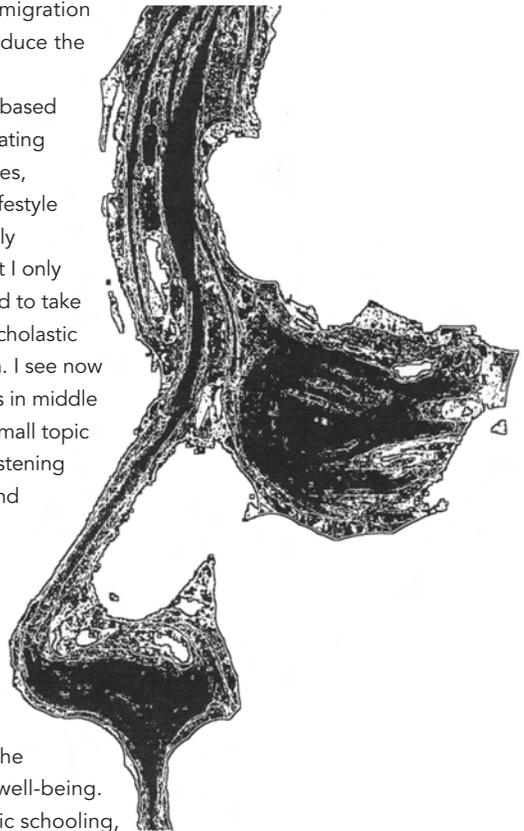
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chains encourage unhealthy eating habits by staying open unreasonably late into the night. For example, Taco Bell® encourages people to indulge in “fourth-meals”. There is no reason to eat a greasy taco at 1 a.m. Greed and gluttony are the founding principles of the fast-food industry, and I think a curfew law would really turn heads toward moderation. Also here in Texas, illegal immigration exacerbates the healthcare disease and can be deterred. Milton Friedman, an American noble prize winning economist, said that it is impossible to have a welfare state with open borders. I could not agree more. Illegal immigrants are receiving healthcare benefits, and tax payers are footing the bill. Richard Wolf of USA Today reported that “the [Texas] state comptroller estimated illegal immigrants cost hospitals \$1.3 billion in 2006” (1). This must stop. We cannot keep giving hand-outs to illegals. A more secure border coupled with tough immigration healthcare legislation can prevent healthcare cost inflation, and reduce the burden on the state.

Education is absolutely critical to a healthcare reform program based on prevention. We need to provide more and better means of educating people on certain key subjects: diet, exercise, communicable diseases, human sexuality, mental health, substance use/abuse, and healthy lifestyle practices. I think high schools should require students to take a highly detailed and contemporary health course regimen. It is a shame that I only had to take one measly semester of Health in high school. I have had to take the same American Government course four times throughout my scholastic career, yet I have only been required to take one semester of Health. I see now that this is far from satisfactory. My proposed course regimen begins in middle school. It will start by teaching primarily diet but also the relatively small topic of healthy lifestyle practices. By healthy lifestyle practices, I mean fastening your seat belt, how to properly lift heavy objects, sleeping habits, and ergonomics. The tone and detail of the courses will mature as the student matures. Exercise will take center stage in 8th grade. They will learn why and how to exercise regularly. Substance use/abuse as well as communicable diseases – STDs – will be the focus for freshman. Sophomore year will introduce human sexuality and mental health. Junior and senior year will be cumulative course years. These courses will bring together all seven topics and focus on making health an active part of the students’ lives. The hope is to emphasize and implement healthy living and promote well-being. This health course regimen could even be offered outside of public schooling, and I really think it would help people become less dependent on healthcare. **CRETE** Joe Prescher



Prevention is the key. Money alone will not solve this problem, and the statistics make that very clear. We continue to spend more and more money, but things aren't changing for the better. It's because the health of the American people is declining faster than the money grow. Healthcare reform is impossible without the cooperation of the people. Government alone should not be held responsible. We as members of society must take the initiative to be educated, and we must show some self-control, or we will further deteriorate our healthcare system and our way of life.