

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
BETTE LINTON  
BEFORE  
THE UNITED STATES SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING  
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Sometimes we think good health is simply the absence of illness.

If you were asked "Are you healthy?" most of us would respond, "I think so, or I hope so!" Being healthy is a way of living that can cause stress. When we take steps to prevent illness and prolong our lives, this enables each of us to achieve a state of well-being.

With the development of new drugs, diagnostic and surgical techniques, as well as advances in medicine, we are offered ways to prevent illnesses, prolong our lives and attempt to live happily ever after.

The downside of this is that the cost of health care is soaring.

Prior to a fall I had last year, I had been taking two prescriptions routinely, one for acid reflux and the other for occasional urinary tract infections. The medication for reflux alone came to about \$140 per month, or almost \$1700 per year, which came out of my own pocket. On a monthly social security check of just \$648.00, it was a significant expense.

Exactly one year ago last Friday I dropped an empty laundry basket, when going upstairs, and in trying to retrieve it stepped backwards down three stairs on to a very hard concrete floor. I broke my right femur in three places and lay there for one hour and 30 minutes before someone could get an ambulance to take me to a nearby hospital. The pain was intense. Today I have a long steel rod, four screws and a plate in my right leg. Now I think, what will it be like going through the security doorway when I fly?

While in the hospital and the nursing home for rehab, I was given pain medications as well as medications to help me sleep. Ambulation during the past year has taken place by way of the wheelchair, walker, and cane. Once in my home, I had the assist of a home health agency to install grab bars and benches to insure my safety.

That summer a nurse introduced me to the Senior Care Plan. For several years I had been paying significant costs for my reflux medication (Aciphex), but I was presented with a plan that could save me huge amounts. I compared the cost of my medication under Medicare Part D with the cost under SeniorCare. Under Medicare Part D, the cost of my medications and premiums would be \$684 a year under the least expensive plan. With Senior Care, my monthly cost for this medication is only \$15, or about \$180 per year - an amazing savings for me of \$504 per year!

So who has helped to pay for these costly medical expenses? Medicare helped with the hospitalization, rehab, and some home health assistance. With my small social security check, I might be living in some small rented room, with poor nutrition.

I am one of those very fortunate senior citizens. My son has given me a room in his home, and even though he has included me in his company “family” health insurance plan, there was no coverage for my medications there. I have been blessed to have this support system, but I think about many elderly people who do not have these benefits, or those who are on many, many medications for their illnesses, or those who have to choose between the right foods to buy or what medications they can afford this month.

I'm sure it is absolutely understandable why I value my Senior Care Card.

Bette Linton