

Health Awareness

Get Involved: It's Your Health

(NAPSA)—Many say the U.S. health care system is broken.

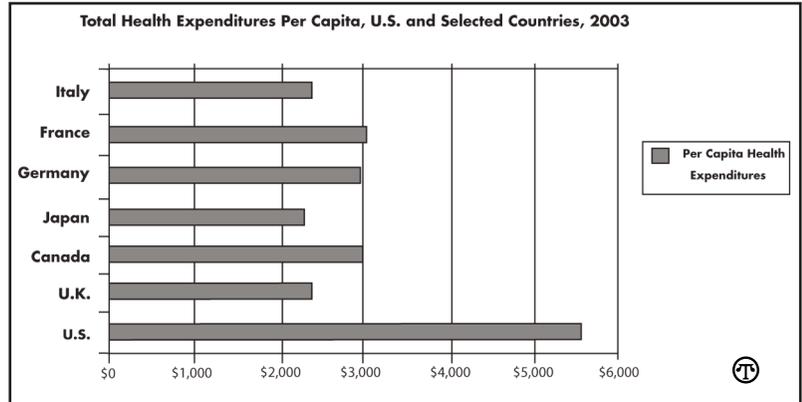
As a nation, we spend more per capita on health care than any other country and still rank near the worst of industrialized countries in the health outcomes of its citizens. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, health care spending accounted for 16 percent of gross domestic product in 2006 and could reach 19.5 percent by 2017.

However, while there is much debate and discussion around health care, there often seems like there's little action to match the rhetoric. One of the factors contributing to the current state of health care is lack of consumer engagement.

Now, an open coalition called ChangeNow4Health is looking to change that. Committed to improving the country's health care system, the coalition is founded on the belief that no single entity can fix the system alone. Instead, what's needed is collaboration from all participants in health care and a higher level of engagement from the consumer who, in reality, is the centerpiece of this system.

With this goal, it recently launched "The Innovation xChange," an ongoing campaign designed to invite and reward new ideas. The coalition aims to reward and possibly implement ideas that can address issues in the current health care system.

"Everywhere else in the economy, consumer is king," said Dr. Jacque Sokolov, a nationally rec-



ognized health care consultant and one of ChangeNow4Health's founding partners. "It is time the same happens in health care."

The initiative gives the end user—the consumer as well as other participants in the health care system—a forum to not only discuss health care issues but channel constructive ideas to an engaged audience. The top 20 ideas will be published in an e-book, "Tomorrow's Health Care," with the entrants of the top three ideas being awarded up to \$10,000 for development and implementation of their idea. In addition, Humana, the national health benefits company and one of the founding partners of the coalition, will consider the possibility of funding the award-winning candidates through the company's Innovation Center, to bring the winning ideas to reality.

Ideas can be entered in the following four categories:

1. Helping Consumers Make

Smarter Health Care Decisions

2. Simplifying the Business of Health Care

3. Preventing Sickness and Maintaining Health

4. General Innovations in Health Care.

Dr. Sokolov added, "Change Now4Health empowers consumers, regardless of professional and personal backgrounds, to bring about real change in the system today, rather than waiting for just another policy change tomorrow."

The basic premise is that a good idea can come from anyone. The technology and structure of the Innovation xChange encourage collaboration, focused thinking and the development of easily workable solutions. You can propose ideas that you think have the potential to improve the system and bring them to reality in collaboration with ChangeNow4Health. Visit www.ChangeNow4Health.com to voice your thoughts on how our system can be improved.