A MESSAGE FROM RICHARD R. KELLEY TO OUR OUTRIGGER 'OHANA

July 9, 2011

In Health Care, Self-Care Comes First
By Dr. Richard Kelley

Who should be primarily responsible for your health care — your government, your employer, your physician or yourself? Those who know me through my articles published almost weekly in Saturday Briefing will not be surprised when I say that each of us should be the person primarily responsible for our own health care and that of our families. For those of us who work at a hotel or facility managed by Outrigger Enterprises Group, our Human Resources department is doing more and more each day to help every member of our 'ohana make intelligent, cost-effective decisions about our personal health and the health of our families.

That is logical because personal habits and actions play a critical role in determining whether you will be healthy and live a long, productive life or if you will be plagued by or die early from disease.

Let me share a personal story. Fifty-one years ago, when I was about to graduate from medical school, I received a letter from the school's alumni office congratulating me on my achievement and asking for a contribution to help the school continue its mission, which was then something like, “To train leaders to care for the sick and injured.” I mailed in a modest contribution, along with a note saying that they might want to revisit the school's mission statement and focus first on preventing sickness and injury. I left town almost the next day for a new life and an internship in California; if the school sent a reply, it was not forwarded to my new address.

The school's mission statement has indeed changed over the years, and it now reads, “To create and nurture a diverse community of the best people committed to leadership in alleviating human suffering caused by disease.” While the statement has changed (it’s a lot more wordy), it looks as if they never read my memo, and a half-century after I left, the school and perhaps the physicians it graduates are still not giving disease prevention the priority it deserves.

In addition, most private and government-sponsored health insurance plans offer physicians little if any reward for prevention. Payments are based on treating a disease rather than preventing it in the first place.

That is why I say that individuals must educate themselves, and take the time and make the effort to live healthily. And that is why Outrigger offers many opportunities for you to do so.

Safeway, America's third-largest traditional supermarket operator and fourth-largest food retailer, recognizes this. It self-insures its employee health care programs, and after carefully analyzing the data, it found that 70 percent of all health care costs are the direct result of personal behavior.

Safeway also determined that 74 percent of all health care costs for those they insure are confined to four chronic conditions — cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. Furthermore, 80 percent of cardiovascular disease and diabetes is preventable, 60 percent of cancers are preventable, and more than 90 percent of obesity is preventable.

All of those conditions add up to a lot of cost, suffering and shortened lives for many, many Safeway employees and their family members.

As a result, Safeway began to focus on improving the health of its employees through wellness programs targeting four key areas: Weight, Tobacco Use, Blood Pressure, and Cholesterol. The results have been remarkable. During the period 2005 - 2009, Safeway's per capita health care costs — counting both the employee and the employer portion — were unchanged, while most American companies’ costs have increased 38 percent over the same period.

Continued on page 2
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Continued from page 1

At Outrigger, even though we are a much, much smaller employer and constrained by the provisions of Hawai‘i’s unique health care laws, we do many things along the same lines as Safeway to assist the members of our ‘ohana in making healthy choices and living longer, more productive lives. Under the direction of Human Resources and our Living Well Team (Kaipo Ho, Lauren Chow, Monica Fo, Kathy Foley, and DJ Nash), we offer a large number of activities and programs. See page 3 for a partial listing.

We hope to be able to expand some, if not all, of these programs to all our ‘ohana across the Pacific — that’s the charge of our Living Well team. In the meantime, look for monthly Living Well calendars in Saturday Briefing.

No matter where you live or work, start today to take charge of your personal lifestyle. It will pay off with better, happier years for the rest of your life.

On the other hand, if you put off taking charge of your health, there is a significant increase in the possibility that you will have to seek treatment by one of my physician colleagues trained to “alleviate human suffering caused by disease.”

See page 3 for partial listing of Living Well Programs
Partial Listing of Living Well Programs
Available at Various Outrigger and OHANA Hotels

Continued from page 2

Wellness Wednesdays – On the third Wednesday of each month at the OHANA Waikiki East, we host a Lunch & Learn program with various wellness-related topics. Past programs have included What Are Calories?; Wellness 101; Sweet Dreams; Goodbye Diet, Hello Health; Weigh to Stay Motivated; Family Fitness and Workstation Wellness. Future topics include Meditation, Understanding Depression, Germ Busters, Understanding Diabetes, and Seasons Eatings. The programs are being taped, and we hope to make them available to all of our ‘ohana across the Pacific.

Also on the third Wednesday of each month, we have a Heart & Sole walk where Waikīkī employees are invited to walk for about 45 minutes to an hour. Our next walk is scheduled for July 20, and we’ll meet at the Outrigger Reef Bell Desk at 5:15 p.m. and walk the beach heading toward Diamond Head.

Exercise Classes – Held each Tuesday and Thursday at 12:15 p.m. for one hour at the OHANA East. We use the large stability ball, small Pilates ball, and hand weights and focus on our core. This is our eighth year of classes!

Employee Wellness Fair – Held annually at the Outrigger Reef and OHANA Waikiki East. Usually, about 13 or 14 vendors participate. This year, our Wellness Fair will be on Wednesday, September 14, at the OHANA Waikiki East and Thursday, September 15, at the Outrigger Reef with booths manned by HMSA, Kaiser, HDS, VSP, American Cancer Society, Doctors On Call (flu shots), HBHC (blood pressure, glucose/cholesterol screenings), and Kapi‘olani Women’s Center (massage therapy, hand-grip strength tests, and mammogram sign-up). We are also in the process of securing speakers from HMSA to talk about topics such as, nutrition, stress, etc.

EAP – Workplace Solutions – Our Employee Assistance Program provides private, confidential, professional assistance when an employee has concerns about relationships, anxiety, depression, drug/alcohol misuse, marital/family/parenting issues, gambling, domestic violence, financial/legal issues, managing stress, death of a loved one, etc.

Other Programs – Annual Mammography and Prostate Screening, the Great American Smokeout, and our Blood Drives, which are held four times a year.

Visitor Industry Charity Walk – Annual company-sponsored walk that supports Hawai‘i’s charities. Outrigger also sponsors a checkpoint at Waikiki Beach Walk®.

Members of our ‘ohana covered by HMSA health insurance can participate in their exciting HealthPass programs, which include periodic screenings, evaluations and recommendations. HealthPass screenings are available year-round throughout Hawai‘i, and we just so happen to have an upcoming HealthPass scheduled at the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach on Tuesday, August 9, and Wednesday, August 10. Contact DJ Nash at dj.nash@outrigger.com to sign up. You can become a fan of HealthPass on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/HealthPass and follow the program on Twitter at: http://www.twitter.com/HealthPass.

‘Ohana members covered by Kaiser may participate in a similar program called Total Health Assessment, which will provide you a personal plan to improve your well-being. This can be scheduled through your Primary Care Physician (PCP). More information is available at www.kp.org.

Outrigger employees take charge of their health for themselves and for others!