



December 26, 2009 – Grand Rapids, MI

## Time to Plan

The carols have been sung. The wrapping paper is in the trash. The family is getting ready to leave. Another Christmas is over and I hope it was a great one for you and your family, but now our sights become set on our hopes for the New Year. There are five days until the clock strikes midnight to usher in 2010—it's time to plan your health goals for the next year.

Here's an important point to keep in mind as you plan: if we as individuals will take care of our own health and work to make it as good as it can be, healthcare cost will decline over the next 20 years. Those of us who are baby boomers will not bankrupt the healthcare system. The ceaseless arguments that are going on over how our healthcare system should be changed will be moot because we will have changed their predictions for expected costs. But it all starts with you and with me.

Take some of the next five days and plan your health goals just like you're planning your other goals:

- What do you want your health to be on December 31, 2010?
- What do you want to weigh?
- What size dress or waist size jeans do you want to be wearing?
- What do you want your blood pressure or your cholesterol to be?
- What physical act will signify your progress—completing a 5k run, swimming 50 laps, taking three flights of stairs?

One of the things that you always tell me is that you don't want to use medications—which contribute to healthcare costs. Well, here's your chance to prove it. Many medications can be reduced or eliminated with a higher level of fitness.

You have an entire year to achieve just about any health goal you can imagine. You have to know what it is, you have to write it down, and you have to establish a plan to accomplish it. I'm working on mine.

I'm also working on how I'm going to better help you achieve those health goals you set for 2010. I'll announce them in a Special Message on January 1st. Until then, spend some time on your health goals. We can change the course of the nation if we change the course of our own health.

What are you prepared to do today?

**Dr. Chet**

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