

# Obama Is In Let The Changes Begin



**By Dr. Walter R. Below, D.M.D**

*Dr. Below strives to stay ahead of the curve on new techniques and information to better serve his patients. He participates in over 100 hours of continuing education annually and has memberships in organizations like the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry focused on dentistry's future from a scientific and/or esthetic perspective.*

*Dr. Walter R. Below has practiced in Westlake for over 20 years, receiving his dental degree at the University of Louisville's School of Dentistry in 1981.*

Barrack Obama won the presidential election on a platform of change. So how will this affect us as far as health care goes and dentistry in particular? I've often said that my true value to my patients is based on keeping my ear to the ground and bringing the best that dentistry has to offer, whether it comes from the east coast or west coast, back to our patients here on the north coast. Let's take a look into the future, shall we?

## Change for Who

I've heard it said that no one likes changes except perhaps a baby with a wet diaper. The fact is we all will be experiencing changes in our health care booth in how it will be practiced and in how it will be paid for. The drums

have been beating for some time now and they seem to be spelling a shift in responsibility for care and payment for that care from third parties back to the patient. What that means is that someone practicing habits or having a lifestyle that is known to be detrimental to ones health and well being will be expected to share a larger burden of the costs associated with their care when something breaks. People who use tobacco products, or are overweight, to mention two examples, will see higher premiums for their health care insurance. The government and private insurance carriers simply cannot continue to support self-destructive practices.

## Healthy Change

Since the old model for

health care, namely treating disease is on the way out. The new order will be a shift to wellness. Reductions in health care premium dollars will be granted to those who practice healthy habits and lifestyles. The big gain here is that we all can experience and enjoy the benefits of health and avoid the need for treatments. We will be preventing disease and be more able to enjoy living.

## Face of Change

Advances in science and technology will help us in our new quest for wellness primarily in our ability to detect and diagnose the earliest stages of disease. Digital imaging and genetic testing will take on new importance by being less invasive and providing better data to al-

low us to tailor progress to achieve a support wellness. Food sciences, diet and nutrition will find new supporters and good, healthy foods will be seen as medicines. After all, we are what we eat. Fuel your engines wisely. Remember last month's article?

## Dental Change

I'm proud to say that dentistry's orientation to prevention has been right on. The mantra of "seek to detect, treat to prevent" will rule and become more widespread. Yes, there may always be cavities, but for those who practice good healthy habits, the total body smile can easily be theirs to be enjoyed. Remember, dental care doesn't have to be expensive. Dental neglect though may cost you in terms of dollars and health.

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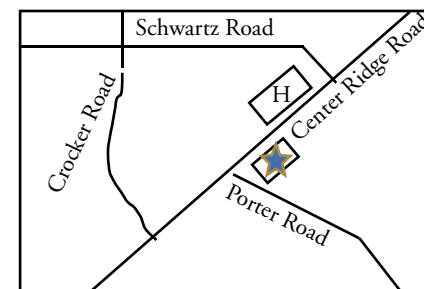


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