

## Coopwood Lays Out Future of Health Care

By ERINN FIGG

Health care was the hot topic Thursday, Sept. 19, as nearly 150 people gathered in the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art auditorium to discuss the current landscape and impending changes in that field.

Health Care: The State of the Industry – one of six seminars in The Daily News’ 2013 Seminar Series – attracted a variety of professionals, most of them from outside the medical realm. They included lawyers, architects, administrative professionals, Realtors, assisted-living specialists and bankers, among others, and most of them were eager to learn more about the Affordable Care Act and how it would affect them. Others came to be inspired.

“Primarily we came here to hear what Dr. Coopwood had to say. He’s an interesting person,” said Senior Care Management Solutions Director Jason Gibert of keynote speaker Dr. [Reginald Coopwood](#), president and CEO of The Regional Medical Center at Memphis. “Also, this seminar addressed a lot of issues that are key to us regarding end-of-life care.”

Coopwood, who was hired in March 2010, is credited with overseeing The MED’s financial turnaround, and with directing improvements that include an \$800,000 renovation of the facility’s emergency department, enhancements to the women’s services department, new technology and plans for expansion.

His speech provided an overview of the business of health care in Memphis, including the flurry of preparations for Oct. 1.

“Any health care organization had better be preparing for the enactment and rollout of this law, as imperfect as it may be,” Coopwood said of the Affordable Care Act. “It is changing health care in that we’re moving forward in a way that really has not been seen in many, many years.”



**Dr. Reginald Coopwood, president and CEO of The Regional Medical Center at Memphis, presents the keynote at The Daily News’ Health Care: State of the Industry seminar on Sept. 19. Coopwood provided an overview of the business of health care in Memphis.**

(Andrew J. Breig)



**A variety of professionals, many from outside the medical sector, attend The Daily News’ Health Care: State of the Industry seminar Sept. 19.**

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The U.S. spends about \$2.6 trillion annually on health care, with an average spend of \$8,233 per person. Tennessee spends about \$6,411 per person annually. The country’s high standards for health care and the expectations of having those needs met immediately are partially responsible for driving those costs, he said, along with rampant expenses. A new stretcher for the emergency room recently cost his hospital \$3,200, while a simple hospital bed costs up to \$8,000.

Other cost drivers are waste, such as over-testing, and poor health care coordination. Chronic conditions are another concern.

“The burden of diabetes in this country is overwhelming,” Coopwood said. “It’s a tsunami that’s going to hit us all. The amount of juvenile diabetes right now far exceeds that of my generation and the generation that preceded us. We as a society are not the healthiest of individuals, and we are also obese as a society. Those things tend to put us at a higher risk for developing diabetes and chronic disease.”

He called for more personal accountability and responsibility in adopting healthier lifestyles.

As to the future of America’s health care system, Coopwood predicted more consolidations, physician practice acquisitions, hospital closures and non-traditional care settings – such as Walgreens’ Healthcare Clinic – and painted a picture of a country that desperately needs change.

“We can’t stay on this course,” he said. “The country can’t support spending 18 percent of its GDP on one industry. It is too risky. It is too burdensome. This is not sustainable. Whether you agree with the ACA or not, the reality is the

intention was to try to drive some of the costs out of the system, and that is yet to be seen.”

A panel discussion led by Daily News publisher [Eric Barnes](#) followed Coopwood’s speech. [Denise Burke](#), member of the Healthcare Regulatory and Transactions Group at Butler, Snow, O’[Mara Stevens & Cannada PLLC](#); Tim Finnell, president and founder of [Group Benefits LLC](#); Daniel Shumate, CEO of Campbell Clinic Orthopaedics; and Coopwood answered audience questions about topics such as the Affordable Care Act, Medicare and the Small Business Health Option Program.

A networking session followed the seminar, which was sponsored by [Butler Snow, Campbell Clinic, Group Benefits LLC](#) and the Southern College of Optometry.

Attendee Elizabeth Dorton of Wright Medical Group found the seminar helpful, both on a personal and a professional level.

“It’s always interesting to hear what the government has planned,” she said.