

## *CLUW News Health Tips*

### **MAKE HEALTH A PLAN OF YOUR TRAVEL PLAN**

Thanks to nurses and other health care workers from Kaiser, delegates to the CLUW Convention had the opportunity to have their blood pressures checked and get assistance for hypertension and other problems that occurred in Seattle. A few CLUW members were taken to the hospital for emergency care and others were referred for medical care. Some were aware they had a medical condition and others found out for the first time that their blood pressure was too high.

Hypertension (high blood pressure), diabetes, heart disease, and asthma are rampant in the United States. Persons with these conditions can feel well for long periods of time. Symptoms are not always present. A person who knows they have a chronic health condition can usually keep the disease under good medical control. But unending demands in the lives of busy women can make it very difficult to keep up with the check-ups, monitoring and medication that are required for good medical control. Sometimes, problems arise despite the best monitoring and self-management.

Preparing for a trip requires planning for health needs as well as family and work-related needs. Unexpected events can occur at any time. Make it a rule to never run out of medication that must be taken on a daily basis. Call for a refill and pick it up several days before you take your last pill. The label on a container of prescribed medication states how many refills you can get until a specific date. Schedule an appointment with your doctor well in advance of this date and be sure to get a new prescription. If you will be out of town, it is important to call ahead to reschedule your appointment, and to ask the doctor to contact the pharmacist to provide you with enough medication to last until you return from the trip and keep the appointment.

If your health plan allows only a 30 day supply of medication at a time, you may wish to consider ordering prescribed drugs by mail. Mail orders are often encouraged by insurance providers as the cost is less and a 90 day supply can be ordered. Of course, it's important to re-order a few weeks before you run out of the medication.

You might want to put a note in your carry-on bag to remind you to pack medications and other supplies you need while away from home. These should be with you on the plane rather than in a checked suitcase. Plastic containers that have places for pills each day of the week are a convenience for forgetful people of all ages. Persons with diabetes may wish to keep a travel kit handy at all times with lancets, glucose tablets, and other supplies that may be needed. The travel kit should also contain emergency numbers to contact your family, doctor and health insurance representative while you are out of town.

Having a plan to manage individual health care needs is as important as a plan to run a meeting or to work on a project. The Women's Health Committee urges everyone to take the time to take care of their health needs so that all of us are able to work on behalf of ourselves and others.