

5 IDEAS TO RAISE (OR SAVE) FUNDS FOR MEDICAL EXPENSES

The news bulletins, articles and reports all tell the same tale: the skyrocketing cost of healthcare is the biggest financial issue this nation is facing. Healthcare related expenditures affect every level and socio-economic group. The strain of this price tag placed on the economy is unsustainable, and the nation is in the midst of an enormous, new-system-building process with the implementation of ACA ("Obamacare") to try and contain costs, while establishing measurable and controlled quality of care measures.

The scope of this blog is not to add to the debates, opinions and talks about ACA. Patients are asked to burden an ever-growing share of costs, ranging from seemingly uncontrolled premium increases, to high deductible and out-of-pocket amounts, from reduced covered benefits to often outrageous prescription copays. Allow me to put forth 5 ideas you may not have thought or known about, and which may help you raise the healthcare funds you need.

1. Prescriptions Drugs

One web address to know: <http://www.needymeds.org/>

This one website offers numerous links to discount cards and manufacturers' rebate programs, provides you with applications for assistance, directs you to over 13,000 free clinics in the country and lists all available assistance resources per drug, generic or not. Check them out and never pay full price again for your prescription!

Another option is to ask your Doctor for samples. A third option is to ask your Doctor to send prescriptions to US BioServices or TNH Pharmacies. Their reps will find financial assistance programs for you if your co-pay is too prohibitive. Another suggestion: Costco has been named by various consumer groups as the cheapest overall pharmacy. You do NOT need to be a member to use their services. Just tell the greeter at the door you are here to fill a prescription, and they will let you in. Your price is the same as any member's.

2. Check your benefits

Based on your social circumstances, financial needs and your State of residency, you may well be eligible for various benefits. Easy to find resources, links and information are readily available.

Visit : <http://www.benefits.gov/> and <https://www.benefitscheckup.org/> if you are a Senior.

From insurance coverage to child support collection, and from housing assistance to subsidized meals, there might well be more help coming to you than you imagined.

3. Have a fundraiser

I am not only talking about a neighborhood garage sale and car wash, family or church bake sale or even the envelope passed among your co-workers here. I am suggesting to go all Social Media. Reach out not only to your friends and family members, but also to their friends and on and on. Reach out to 100 acquaintances, and see how many people respond! (yes, you have 100 acquaintances). Remember: if you don't ask, you can't receive.

May I suggest 3 "professional" websites which will help you with the planning and execution: <http://www.giveforward.com> - <http://www.youcaring.com/> - <http://www.gofundme.com/>

4. Cash in or borrow against your life insurance

I understand this policy is not a savings account, not meant for you during this lifetime. It is your gift, the security blanket, peace of mind from you to the ones who will stay here after you. By no means, would I suggest you now ignore the welfare of young children or of a spouse with financial needs. All I am asking is for you to consider using that life insurance for yourself, now that you need it, and if others don't.

Though cancer-focused, the links below present information that may be used in all healthcare-related cases:

<http://www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/insurance-and-financial-assistance/converting-life-insurance-into-income/> and <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/findingandpayingfortreatment/managinginsuranceissues/healthinsuranceandfinancialassistanceforthecancerpatient/health-insurance-and-financial-assistance-life-ins-policies>

5. GOOGLE away

Are you aware of all the free or low cost services available through your city, county or State, or through the many community and national charitable organizations? Let me name a few: Free transportation to and from Dr offices, labor and patient rights legal advice, basic needs including free meal delivery, child care services, mortgage and debt support, tax benefits guidance, reduced utility bills, mental services, emotional support, free gas. Google the type of service you require, your city and the word "assistance" or "free" and see what comes up. Contact your city or county, and check out what they offer. Check out the local paper for ads. Google the name of your diagnosis with "assistance" and check out societies and associations.

Another avenue to explore: remember all those cards you put somewhere, never used? Organizations such as AARP or AAA extend discounts to their members, including insurance services, car rental and lodgings, car repairs, but also reduced entrance fees to attractions, restaurants, and numerous venues. These will save you \$ and a dollar saved is a dollar earned.

All websites may not lead to financial nirvana, but many of them will help you along the way. Do not be discouraged if cash is not handed over. Save cash on utilities or mortgage, and pay a medical bill. Spend 30 min initializing a fundraiser effort, and watch the generosity of family, friends and oftentimes total strangers unveiled. Get expertise, services, groceries, etc from those who told you "call me when you need anything!". Now is the time to ask.

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