

2017: A Year in Review with HealthWell Foundation President Krista Zodet



The HealthWell Foundation experienced strong growth in 2017, with donations that allowed us to help nearly 90,000 people access life-saving medical treatments. HealthWell President Krista Zodet reflects on 2017 and talks about how the Foundation is poised to continue its mission.

Since its inception in 2003, the HealthWell Foundation (HealthWell) has successfully navigated many changes in the health care landscape. What were your biggest challenges and opportunities in 2017?

The opportunity to expand our assistance to nearly 90,000 Americans, who otherwise may not be able to afford their chronic or life-altering medical treatments, was our greatest opportunity in 2017. Given that we approved nearly three times the number of grants than in any previous year, our biggest challenge was to ensure that all patients we serve feel that the process is as user-friendly and easy as possible.

HealthWell opened a significant number of new funds in 2017. How was this possible?

We were able to open many new funds in 2017 thanks to the continued generosity of our long-standing donors as well as new and returning donors, all of whom are dedicated to helping patients across a wide variety of disease areas. Donors place their trust in HealthWell for a number of reasons:

- **We put patients' needs first** by creating innovative funds that help people start and stay on the medical treatments they desperately need, with real-time grants so patients can get approved instantly and start their treatments immediately. We continue to create new, cutting-edge funds for patients in need, such as our Pediatric Assistance Fund and our new Cancer-Related Behavioral Health Fund. In addition, we work closely with our patient, provider and pharmacy communities to help us identify funds patients need the most. Importantly, we honor every single grant we award. It is our promise to each grantee that once they're approved, they're able to access their grant up to the maximum grant amount or for the duration of their 12-month enrollment period, whichever comes first.
- **We have always had extremely high ethical standards** and are committed to meeting federal regulations that govern the copay field. We believe that charitable patient assistance programs (CPAPs) should make the highest ethical standards a cornerstone of operations.

- **We're efficient** and have been recognized by leading charity watchdog groups such as Charity Navigator, Guidestar, *Forbes*, and the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. We're proud that HealthWell spends 99% of every dollar we receive from all sources on patient grants and services. All of our administrative costs, including fundraising, are funded through our investment income.

Did the total amount of donations to HealthWell increase or decrease in 2017?

HealthWell's 2017 financials are currently being finalized and audited. We are projecting a significant increase in 2017 revenue over 2016 revenue when our 990 is published in Q2 of 2018.

How has HealthWell been affected by increased scrutiny of the copay assistance industry?

Since our inception in 2003 and launching our first fund in 2004, HealthWell has followed the guidance and Advisory Opinions of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to the letter. Other than a few minor/small adjustments to our standards and practices with the most recent guidance provided to the industry in 2015, we have not been affected by the increased scrutiny. We indeed welcome the additional attention the copayment assistance industry is receiving, as it shows that a model such as HealthWell's, which is based on compliantly servicing patient financial needs, can thrive.

Some recent news articles question if copay foundations help drug companies to keep drug costs high. What are your thoughts on that?

HealthWell is here to help patients afford their medications and premiums under the current laws of the land and national health care policy. As with any charitable organization, we are hopeful that one day our services will no longer be required. Our intent is to assist patients in their time of need, and we neither have nor seek any role or voice in drug pricing.

HealthWell maintains a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, for its low administrative expenses and efficiency. With donations growing substantially, how has HealthWell successfully managed costs?

HealthWell has successfully managed its costs through a combination of data-driven organizational policies and procedures and successful relationships with critical vendors designed to promote efficient grants and services to our patients. We have established new platform and technological advances, both internally and with our vendors, that have allowed us to increase efficiency as donations have grown. For example, our new website makes it easy for patients and their stakeholders to more easily navigate through all of our potential fund offerings. Our dedicated pharmacy and provider portals let patients apply for assistance electronically and receive real-time grants, and give pharmacies and providers an easy way to monitor and manage the patients we are helping.

Thanks to these streamlined operations, and the fact that patients are using their HealthWell grants more consistently, we are able to keep our costs low, while quickly and efficiently serving a higher volume of patients. 99% of all monies received by HealthWell from all sources go directly to patients grants and services.

How have increased donations to HealthWell benefitted patients?

We were able to provide grants to nearly 90,000 patients in 2017, which is 50,000 more than in any prior year. We also have been able to keep many of our disease funds open for longer durations than in prior years, while also launching or reopening 20 funds.

What is HealthWell's outlook for the coming year?

HealthWell is looking forward to helping more patients access their needed medical care in 2018 through new programs, including a first of its kind Cancer-Related Behavioral Health Fund. We are also considering new and innovative ways to help patients in their health care journey, especially given the ongoing changes in the health care and insurance industries.