

2017 A YEAR OF GROWTH: A YEAR IN REVIEW

A Message from HealthWell Foundation President, Krista Zodet



Krista Zodet, President

As we approach the end of our first quarter, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the monumental growth we experienced in 2017. Thanks to the continued commitment and generosity of our corporate and individual donors, 2017 was the busiest and most impactful year in HealthWell's history. As a result of their continued trust and support, we received more than \$358 million in donations, which allowed us to provide a financial lifeline to more than 88,000 underinsured Americans. On behalf of myself, my dedicated team, and our Board, I would like to express a sincere thank you for helping us help those in need and for your generous support, which made all of this possible. While it is heartbreaking to know that there are so many patients in need, we are thankful and honored that we continue to be a trusted

resource for our donors and for those we serve. Our hope for 2018 is to assist even more patients in need so no one goes without critical, often life-saving, medical treatments because they can't afford them.

2017 represented the busiest year in HealthWell's history. From the launch or reopening of more than 20 funds across a variety of disease areas, to providing assistance to almost 50,000 more patients than in any other year, to further enhancing our program and processes to provide the best user experience possible, the HealthWell team is proud of its achievements and its commitment to helping those in need. I'll go into more detail about our 2017 activities and the exciting initiatives we have underway for 2018 later in this issue, so I hope you'll continue to read on. I'd also like to invite you to checkout our [Year in Review](#) to learn more about our 2017 accomplishments.

In the fall, we completed a patient outreach initiative where we visited local grant recipients to hear their stories and photograph them along with their families. The project was a huge success and we are excited to share these heartfelt testimonials in future materials. In this issue, I'm honored to introduce you to Leslie. Leslie is an SLE grant recipient who was desperate to find financial assistance to help her with her life-changing medications. I'll share her interview later in this newsletter.

FUND UPDATE

Last summer, we were honored to launch 14 new funds and, thanks to the continued generosity of our donors, in December 2017, we launched a new fund to provide copayment and premium assistance to Medicare patients living with acromegaly. Through the fund, we are now able to provide up to \$10,000 in financial assistance for a 12-month grant to eligible acromegaly patients who have annual household incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Acromegaly is a rare, but serious, condition caused by too much growth hormone (GH) in the blood and is usually caused by a non-cancerous tumor in the pituitary gland called a pituitary adenoma.

NEW REAL WORLD HEALTH CARE SERIES

According to [Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#), the warning signs of behavioral health issues such as clinical depression are frequently discounted by patients and family members, who mistakenly assume feeling depressed is normal for people struggling with serious health conditions. MHA goes on to note that the symptoms of depression are frequently masked by these other medical illnesses, resulting in treatment that addresses the symptoms, but not the underlying depression. We've seen firsthand how financial distress can impact the health and lives of individuals and families. Cancer patients with behavioral health conditions are particularly hard hit; according to the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), patients with some forms of cancer incur \$8,000 more per year in health care costs than cancer patients without behavioral health conditions. We are excited to announce that our upcoming [Real World Health Care](#) blog series will focus specifically on behavioral health issues associated with chronic illness. We hope you'll take a few minutes to [sign up for alerts](#) and follow this exciting new series.

OUR ALLIANCES

We are always looking to work with organizations who share in our mission to improve access to care for those in need and, in 2017, we were honored to expand our relationships with dozens of leading patient support organizations. Through the support and dedication of these amazing organizations, we are able to reach disease-specific communities and

From Desperation to Joy: One Woman's Journey with Lupus



Leslie Armstrong Davis spent most of her adult years enjoying an active life, full of pastimes she enjoyed like bowling, roller skating and long-distance walks. She had a physically demanding and rewarding career as a certified nurse assistant. But just before the Baltimore, Maryland, resident turned 40, her health took a turn for the worse.

"My hair started to fall out," said Leslie. "I became easily fatigued, started having memory loss problems, and developed rashes and lesions all over my body."

Leslie initially thought she might have alopecia and sought the services of a dermatologist, who took a biopsy of her skin lesions to determine her diagnosis: systemic lupus erythematosus, a chronic autoimmune disease that causes widespread inflammation and tissue damage.

A Life Altered

Lupus changed Leslie's life dramatically. The once outgoing woman became housebound and isolated. She could no longer work

support groups to raise awareness about our funds, cross refer patients and help more patients in need. We'd like to thank these organizations for helping us spread the word: ALS Association, Northeast ALS Consortium (NEALS), Huntington's Disease Society of America (HDSA), Colon Cancer Alliance (CCA), Macular Degeneration Association (MDA), Cancer Support Community (CSC), Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (BCAN); Tourette Association of America (TAA), Parkinson's Foundation, HCU Network America, AIDS Institute, the Vasculitis Foundation, the Association of Community Cancer Centers (ACCC), The Endocrine Society, and the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance.

WAYS TO GIVE

Your donation allows us to provide a financial lifeline to patients who otherwise might forgo critical, possibly life-saving, medical treatments because they simply can't afford it. As you read earlier in this issue, in 2017 we were able to assist almost 90,000 patients in accessing their treatment. Thank you for supporting our mission and for allowing us to say "Yes" to so many in need. Unfortunately, our work is far from done and we can't do this alone. We hope that you will once again consider the HealthWell Foundation worthy of your support.

Did you know that 100% of your donated dollar goes directly to patient grants and services? Your donation is put to work immediately to assist underinsured patients who have nowhere else to turn.

There are many ways you can support our mission!

1. Make a [general donation](#).
2. [Donate](#) in the name of a friend or loved one.
3. [Plan](#) a donation in your will.
4. Change a child's life by donating to the [Pediatric Assistance Fund](#).
5. Spread the word about the important work we do by [telling us](#) your HealthWell story.

You can also help by spreading the word about the life-changing work we do. Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and take a look at our LinkedIn profile. Helping us spread the word is also a critical and valued contribution to the HealthWell Foundation. Every dollar makes a difference in the

and was forced to go on disability. The loss of her income made it impossible for her to afford medical insurance, at a time she desperately needed it.

She especially struggled to afford the medications she needed to keep her lupus from flaring up and manage related health risks. She often went months at a time without taking her medications, occasionally scraping together the \$250 needed for a 10-minute doctor's visit so she could get her prescriptions renewed.

"I literally had no money," Leslie recalled. "My house went into foreclosure. I couldn't pay my utility bills. My teeth started to rot because I couldn't afford to see a dentist. It got to the point where I didn't want to live. I was desperate to die."

A Life Renewed

Leslie eventually found part-time work as a nurse's aide, which helped her pay her bills. She says her life really took a turn for the better after a stay in the hospital in 2013.

"The hospital put me in touch with a kidney doctor, who got me on the correct regimen of medications," she said. "A social worker at the hospital helped me find additional resources, and once I was feeling better, I was able to start working full-time again."

With her full-time status at work, Leslie qualified for coverage under her employer's medical insurance plan. However, she continued to struggle with the out-of-pocket costs for her nine daily medications. Fortunately, the HealthWell Foundation was there to help.

"When I was approved for a HealthWell grant, I became so overwhelmed, I cried," she recalled. "I felt like I hit the lottery."

Today, Leslie is back to a fully active life while managing her lupus. She

life of a patient in need and we appreciate your continued support.

SHARE YOUR STORY

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works full-time as a rehabilitation counselor for people with physical disabilities. She also volunteers in her community as a block captain. She and her husband enjoy spending as much time as possible with their five grandchildren. She is quick to credit HealthWell for their help.

"HealthWell really helped me put my life back together again," Leslie concluded. "They came into my life during a very dark time. Now the light is shining again."

The HealthWell Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that reduces financial barriers to care for underinsured patients with chronic and life-altering illnesses. For more information, please contact us at support@healthwellfoundation.org or call 240-632-5300.

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