



Krista Zodet, President

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The HealthWell Foundation started 2015 buoyed by our tremendous success in 2014. We had our largest year ever in terms of donations, and I would like to personally thank each individual and corporate donor who helped make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of patients living with chronic and life-altering illnesses.

Those donations helped HealthWell launch a new fund in March to bring financial relief to people living with pulmonary fibrosis. Read on to learn more about [pulmonary fibrosis](#) and our new fund.

Also in the spotlight last month was HealthWell's MS Fund, which is open to new and re-enrolling patients. During March, we recognized MS Awareness Month with a social media outreach campaign designed to let MS patients on Medicare know about our fund. We combined active postings on our Twitter feed and Facebook account with two powerful features on our [Real World Health Care](#) blog.

One featured grant recipient, [Charlie Barron](#), stated "The HealthWell Foundation has given me the peace of mind to focus my energy on fighting MS and encouraging others to do the same." Meet Charlie and learn about his courageous journey in this issue!

The other post featured a Q&A with [Ann Romney](#), who shared her experiences as an MS patient before and during husband Mitt Romney's presidential campaign. Ms. Romney's story netted 16,000 "likes" on HealthWell's Facebook page.

As a result of these combined efforts, we provided grants to 650 MS patients through our MS Fund in March – a great sign that our outreach efforts were effective.

FUND UPDATE

Everyone at HealthWell was thrilled to launch our newest fund in March to provide copayment assistance to [pulmonary fibrosis](#) patients. We are working closely with the [Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation](#) to alert patients about the availability of this fund.

The Pulse

Spring 2015 Quarterly e-News Update



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According to the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, there are a number of potential causes of pulmonary fibrosis, including exposure to airborne toxins, such as asbestos or mold; undergoing radiation treatment; and taking some specific medicines, including those that treat cancer, heart disease and bacterial infections. Genetics are also thought to play a role in PF. Pulmonary fibrosis can strike at any age. For many people living with pulmonary fibrosis, simply breathing presents its own challenges.

“Because of the prevalence and financial toxicity of pulmonary fibrosis, this fund provides access to treatment options that may have been unattainable,” said Nancy Carteron, MD, FACR, Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of California San Francisco and Vice Chair and Secretary, HealthWell Foundation’s Board of Directors.

“We can help these patients reduce anxiety, and increase well-being by eliminating excess cost stressors associated with a chronic disease diagnosis,” added Dr. Carteron, a leading patient advocate for those with high-cost chronic disease.

KEEP IN MIND!

Did you know that copayment assistance foundations operate independently of each other? This means that if one foundation closes a fund, the fund may still be open at another. Please be sure to check our list of [Diseases and Medications](#) for the most up to date information about HealthWell's funds.

Also, it's important to remember that if we do not have an open fund for a specific disease area, we encourage you to check our [Other Resources](#) page, which provides contact information for other copayment foundations and manufacturer assistance programs. Our representatives can also provide valuable information about these resources through the hotline.

CHARLIE'S STORY



Charlie Barron was raised to set goals, make plans, get things done. But setting and meeting goals has become exceptionally hard since Charlie, 46, discovered he has multiple sclerosis.

Because of his MS, Charlie is unable to work and therefore struggles to pay for the expensive treatments he has needed since he was diagnosed in 2010, a decade after his symptoms first appeared. He received HealthWell Foundation grants in 2014 and 2015.

Before his diagnosis, this resident of DeKalb, Ga., had a career as a chef. On the job, he often stood 12-14 hours a day, despite a pins-and-needles sensation in his feet



ACA UPDATE

In late March, we recognized the fifth anniversary of the passage of the Affordable Care Act. More than 16 million previously uninsured Americans have gained health coverage under the Act since it became law. These gains have delivered the largest drop in the uninsured rate in four decades, bringing it down to 13.2 percent.

While partisan debate about the Act continues, one thing is certain: an increase in insured Americans doesn't necessarily mean they will receive the care they need. Consider these statistics from the Commonwealth Fund:

- 66 million Americans reported that they did not receive needed health care because of its cost
- 21 percent of adults with health insurance spent 5 percent or more of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs
- 13 percent of adults with health insurance spent 10 percent or more of their income on out-of-pocket health care costs

Choosing a health plan can be complicated, no matter what your income level or health situation. Fortunately, there are resources you can refer to for help:

Health Insurance Marketplace: <https://marketplace.cms.gov/>

How to Choose Marketplace

Insurance: <https://www.healthcare.gov/choose-a-plan/>

How to Pick a Health Insurance Plan:

<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/2012/09/understanding-health-insurance/index.htm>

and numbness in his legs that went on for years. For a long time, he considered his physically demanding work the cause of his pain, yet his employer provided no health insurance.

Later, Charlie combined his cooking skills with his interest in fitness to open his own business. As a personal trainer, he led clients in morning workouts in their homes, then cooked them a healthy breakfast in their kitchens. At that point, he bought himself health insurance.

However, his insurance policies have been unreliable in covering his medications. For instance, his first medication was covered, but when it proved ineffective for him, his insurance company declined to pay for the next prescribed treatment. Moving from private insurance, he obtained Medicare coverage through disability and thought those challenges would change. Recently his doctor recommended adding a second drug to Charlie's treatment plan which has staved off relapses for the last two years, but the out-of-pocket expense was still unmanageable.

In a note thanking the Foundation for its financial assistance, Charlie described how he felt when he found out the cost of his care.

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MEET THE HEALTHWELL TEAM

In this issue, we're pleased to feature our newest member of the HealthWell Team, Anaam Plunkett. Anaam is an earth-friendly animal lover who hopes one day to visit all seven continents with her husband (they have four down, three to go!). She earned her BA in Psychology from George Mason University. Prior to joining the team last fall and serving as Operations Manager, Anaam worked as a Human Resources Coordinator. Anaam plays a critical role in the day-to-day operations of the Foundation by serving as a conduit between those we assist and the internal HealthWell team. Having held previous positions in customer service and education, her sharp skill set, coupled with her compassionate knowledge of what our grant recipients are facing, align her perfectly for this role.



Anaam shares her experience and what motivates and inspires her. "Providing superb customer service with attention to detail is what motivates me. I, along with the HealthWell team, genuinely care about the patients who apply for assistance. I strive to make the application and reimbursement process efficient and work to resolve issues before they become challenges for the patients and those involved in their care. It is wonderful to hear of a patient's experience at HealthWell and this inspires me to become more dedicated to the cause. I value the work I do because others value it even more. I am proud to say I help patients feel better. I am proud to hear when something I have had a part in makes a significant difference in their lives; something as life-changing as being able to afford medication and not having to make the choice between putting food on the table for their families. I am proud to be a part of HealthWell."

"Even though I was ready to physically fight to get my life back from MS, my finances were not so ready for battle," he wrote. "I learned that the medication my doctor prescribed would cost upwards of \$1,100 per month. I felt that I had been knocked down before I even had a chance to throw the first punch."

"The HealthWell Foundation has given me the peace of mind to focus my energy on fighting MS and encouraging others to do the same," Charlie's letter said. He continues learning about MS at a local MS center, takes physical therapy and has participated in activities such as a painting class with others coping with MS.

Social media connects him with additional people with the illness. Hearing about others' experiences with MS, giving them encouragement or simply offering a kind word to lift their spirits gives Charlie strength.

Benefiting from the supportive care of his wife, brother-in-law and 13-year-old daughter, he urges other people with MS to seek support from family or a strong support group. For caregivers, he recommends researching MS through the Internet, books or the MS Society to know what to expect.

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WAYS YOU CAN HELP

Our donors are the lifeblood of HealthWell, and there are many ways you can support our important work and make a real difference.

1. Make a [general donation](#).
2. Give a [monthly gift](#). Even \$10 a month can make a positive difference in patients' lives.
3. [Donate](#) in the name of a friend or loved one.
4. [Plan](#) a donation in your will.
5. Change a child's life by donating to the [Pediatric Assistance Fund](#).
6. Ask your employer to become a [Corporate Partner](#).

Consider these [other ways](#) to support HealthWell.

Not comparing the present with the past is important to him as well. "It's not about what you used to do, it's about what you are trying to do now," Charlie says.

SHARE YOUR STORY

If HealthWell has made a positive difference in your life, or the life of someone you know, we want to hear from you!

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