



Have health insurance? Think you're well protected? *Think Again!*

You might think that debt and despair are problems only of the uninsured. If so, think again. Millions of insured Americans face enormous health care costs and risk financial ruin. You may see your friends, coworkers, or neighbors try to recover from a painful illness or a car accident. What you probably don't see is how little their health insurance covers or how costly their medical bills are. Millions of Americans suffer from devastating financial burdens at the same time they face serious illness or injury. The middle class, those with college degrees, decent jobs, and health insurance—the group of people who feel secure and well-protected—are at high, and often highest, risk of being left penniless when serious illness hits.

Millions of insured Americans are spending their life savings on health care

- 50.7 million insured Americans spent more than one-tenth of their family income on health care in 2008.
- 13.5 million insured Americans spent more than a quarter of their family income on health care in 2008.

People who can't afford out-of-pocket costs delay and skip needed health care

- More than half of adults with inadequate insurance (the “underinsured”) reported that they went without care—they didn't fill a prescription; skipped recommended tests, treatment, or follow-up care; or didn't go to the doctor when they had a medical problem—due to costs.
- Among cancer patients with insurance, 8 percent “were turned away or were unable to get a specific treatment because of insurance issues,” and 5 percent delayed or decided not to get cancer care due to costs.

Those who do seek medical care are often ruined financially

- About half of all personal bankruptcy cases are due, at least in part, to medical reasons.
- From 2000 until June 2007, roughly 5 million families filed for bankruptcy due to medical reasons.
- One out of five people who reported having medical bill problems considered filing for bankruptcy because of their bills.

Health costs take more than family assets

- Nearly half of home foreclosures were caused, at least in part, by financial issues stemming from a medical problem.
- Nearly two-thirds of the millions of Americans in families with medical bill problems had trouble paying for food, clothing, or their rent or mortgage.
- Some with medical debt face legal consequences, including being sued for the debt or having their wages garnished. In extreme cases, people have been sent to jail for failing to comply with court orders regarding their medical debt.

And it's likely to get worse . . .

From 2000 to 2007, premiums for employer-based family coverage rose more than five times faster than the average U.S. earnings.