The Cost of Blood

August 25, 2009 By Shawn Decker

At a town hall meeting in Colorado last week, Nathan Wilkes introduced President Obama. Nathan, the father of a 6-year old with hemophilia, explained the ridiculous costs that many families with hemophilia know all too well.

Here's a YouTube clip of Nathan from 2007, telling his story and advocating for a single payer system, which is not currently on the table. Try to ignore the music, which wasn't needed to earn my empathy.

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I know how expensive this disease can be, and thank my lucky stars that I am considered mild, which means I have a decent amount of clotting factor for a hemophiliac and don't require a lot of the expensive blood product treatments. My hope is that the current administration continues to take advocate for those with "pre-existing conditions". With my medical resume, my monthly insurance premium is *four times* what Gwenn's is. Not that she isn't trying to catch up- her premium goes up by 20% every year.

And my coverage sucks- I hit my cap for the year in four months because my HIV medications are so expensive. Do we get by? Yes. I can't even complain compared to what most people deal with, or the tales that Nathan shared. That said, Gwenn and I are one medical disaster away from ruin. If that fridge that fell off the top shelf last week at Lowe's had hit me everything would be different.

Is there wasteful spending in Washington? Of course. But is there a moral obligation to make health care reform a priority? Absolutely. I didn't need to get crushed by that fridge to realize that, and I won't sit idly by as others are financially ruined under the current health care system.

Positively Yours,
Shawn

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