



**Health Care  
in America**

*One story  
can make a  
difference . . .*

**Families USA  
Story Bank**

## What is Families USA?

Families USA is the national nonprofit, nonpartisan, consumer health care organization. Founded in 1982 by the Phil and Kate Villers Foundation. Families USA is funded by grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and many other foundations. *Families USA accepts no money from the health care industry.*

Families USA is dedicated to the goal of making quality and affordable health care available to all Americans. To achieve this goal, Families USA produces reports that analyze the state of health care today. Families USA also lobbies Congress for common-sense legislation that will help Americans afford health care. By working with state and local health care advocacy groups, Families USA supports community initiatives to improve access to health care.

## What is the Story Bank?

The Families USA Story Bank is a database of more than 950 stories from people all across the country. It contains contact information and relevant details of Americans who wish to share their health care story. The stories are collected under strict confidentiality. Details and contact information are shared only with the permission of the individual and then only with reporters, congressional staff, and Administration officials who agree to respect the privacy and limits each individual imposes. *At no time is anyone ever obligated to speak to a reporter if he or she chooses not to.*

## Why does Families USA collect stories?

We collect stories to help put a human face on today's health care issues. Too often, health care becomes an oversimplified matter of dollars and cents (or billions of dollars and cents), and the real people who are affected are forgotten.

We share our stories with reporters, congressional staff, and Administration officials for use in news stories, testimony before Congress, and press events that highlight specific problems. Everyone in our Story Bank is eager to share their stories under these circumstances because they feel that exposing the problem increases awareness and hopefully, helps bring a solution.

# How does the Story Bank work?

Families USA finds out about particular stories in a variety of ways:

- A direct call to the Communications department at Families USA in Washington, DC, 202-628-3030. People call us directly to ask for advice or assistance with a problem they are having with their health care.
- E-mail [storybank@familiesusa.org](mailto:storybank@familiesusa.org) or visit [www.familiesusa/tell-us-your-story.html](http://www.familiesusa/tell-us-your-story.html) to submit your story on the web.
- State and local advocates: Advocates working at the local level often hear stories of people who have had problems with their health care. After clearing it with the person affected, the advocates pass consumers' contact information on to us to conduct an interview.

## How are the stories used?

Every day, Families USA gets requests from reporters who are working on health care stories and need real people to interview. Real people not only help to put a face on the issue, they also help explain complex issues in a much simpler way. If we find someone in our story bank that matches a request from a reporter, we call the person and ask if he or she is still willing to speak to a reporter about his or her health care story. If the person is willing, we then pass along their contact information to the reporter.

Families USA only works with respected news establishments. Nonetheless, participants should be aware that if a reporter asks a question that they prefer not to answer, they have every right to refuse to answer that question. If that means that the interview is terminated, so be it. People should always feel comfortable with the reporter and the questions they ask. Families USA would never force anyone to be interviewed. We fully understand that participants are volunteering their time and sacrificing a little bit of their privacy to help educate people about a particular health care issue.

## How can I submit a story?

We hope this pamphlet has answered some questions you may have had about the Families USA story bank. If you are interested in participating in the Families USA story bank, or work with consumers who may be interested in sharing their story please fill out the form on the back or photocopy the form for health care consumers in your area. If you have any other questions e-mail [storybank@familiesusa.org](mailto:storybank@familiesusa.org) or contact Aman Gohal, Communications Associate at 1-800-593-5041 ext. 3621.

