

2009 - It's Time!

Why We Need National Health Care Reform Now

Jerry and Karren Andreasson have painted, remodeled and roofed homes for most of their adult lives. This hard-working couple moved to Tennessee almost a year ago to be near family. At that point, Jerry developed emphysema. The illness left him too breathless for the physical exertion construction work requires. He also developed severely painful dental problems. He could not afford private health insurance and was not eligible for any state health insurance so he tried to manage the pain with over-the-counter painkillers. One evening he accidentally overdosed. **A single night in an emergency room left the uninsured man with \$20,000 of medical debt.**



Homeless couple Jerry and Karen Andreasson are working and uninsured. They go without needed medical care because they cannot afford it.

Now, Jerry and Karren sell homeless newspapers in downtown Nashville for about \$40 a day. They spend the majority of their earnings on a small hotel room to shelter themselves from the heat and the cold. "I'm trying to make an honest living," Jerry says. "I'm trying to give back to society and better myself." **He feels that if they had healthcare, they could probably get regular jobs.** Although they are both working, Jerry has six prescriptions he cannot afford to fill. Karren's health also keeps her from holding down better-paying jobs. Her arthritis is very painful and she cannot afford to fill the prescriptions she undoubtedly needs.

Jerry and Karren are trying to survive on very limited charity care until they are eligible for Medicare. Jerry has only one of several inhalers he needs. He still needs oral surgery but does not have the \$1,000 it would cost to get the procedure done without insurance. **If Jerry and Karren had affordable health insurance, they may be able to get the medical care they need and could go back to better-paying jobs.**



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