

## Learn how you can help California's Del Norte County Healthcare District address rising healthcare costs

Visit our Website

*The Del Norte Healthcare District is an elected public agency in Del Norte County, California. The following content was approved by unanimous vote of the District's Board of Directors.*

### Join Our Fight Against Overpriced Healthcare

The Del Norte Healthcare District is on a mission. After repeated requests for help from our residents and visitors, we are fighting high priced healthcare and incomprehensible medical bills.

The public brought us stories of brief doctor visits followed by \$2,000 doctor bills, colonoscopy charges of \$6,000, and hospital bills exceeding \$10,000 for minor surgery performed in Crescent City. Nationwide, roughly \$3.5 trillion is spent yearly on healthcare--more than \$10,000 per person, every year. Now, the Healthcare District is comparing charges at local and out of area facilities to help patients find cost-effective care.

Why are rising healthcare costs important? Because we all pay for it--whether by larger "out of pocket" costs, lower wages (to make up for the higher cost for employers to provide healthcare coverage), higher taxes (to pay for government sponsored health programs) and more "job outsourcing" (where employers send jobs out of state or overseas to avoid high priced healthcare at home).

Why are healthcare costs out of control? In part, because the prices charged to patients are often a closely guarded secret. Although the "list price" of tests and procedures (called "chargemaster" rates) is published by hospital systems, the real price you pay (the "negotiated rate") is only known to hospital systems and insurance companies.

How can we find out the real prices charged for healthcare? With two documents:

- (1) Your itemized bill (hospitals generally mail out a summary bill but not an itemized bill unless you specifically request it).
- (2) Your insurance company or Medicare Explanation of Benefits (which will show both the fee charged by the hospital or provider and the amount approved by the insurer).

How can you help tackle the problem of high-priced healthcare? By providing the Del Norte Healthcare District with a copy of your itemized bill and Explanation of Benefits. We will add your data (anonymously) to our growing list of healthcare prices charged by doctors, hospitals, and testing facilities—local and out of area. And we will publish the result and post the data on our website.

If you would like to help by sharing your bills and insurance statements, just email them to the Healthcare District at [dnhcd@delnortehealth.com](mailto:dnhcd@delnortehealth.com) or drop off at our office in the Wellness Center on 550 E. Washington Blvd., suite 400, from 8 am to 12 noon weekdays. If you prefer to remain anonymous, simply remove your identifying information. If you would like us to review your charges and follow up with you, please provide your contact information, which we will not release to anyone.

As always, feel free to contact the Del Norte Healthcare District with your healthcare related ideas, or attend our monthly meetings held the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December when we meet on the 17<sup>th</sup>), 6:30 pm at the Wellness Center on 550 E. Washington Blvd., Crescent City. Executive Secretary Hendricks Doris Hendricks is also available by phone at (707) 464-9494. Visit us on the web at <http://delnortehealthcare.com/>

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

**Del Norte Healthcare District Board of Directors,**

**Elizabeth Austen Kevin Caldwell, M.D. Gregory Duncan, M.D.**

**Dohn Henion, Esq. Michael Young**