

# Easing the Breathing & the Budget

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We are taught that our choices have consequences, both good and bad. Politics, family, faith, financial means, and overall health, both mental and physical, influence the type of choices that we make. For many people that are on a tight budget, financial means has the greatest influence on day-to-day choices.

After the rent, electricity, and car payment are paid for the month, many important choices need to be made with the remaining money. Many times the choices can be difficult as other necessities like food, gasoline, car insurance, and medications compete for limited resources.

Fortunately, the Medication Application Service (MediAppS) of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Winona can help individuals and families either by assisting with the payment of medications or helping to find lower cost solutions to their medication needs, depending on the household income and residency. Here's a real life example.

## *Edward's Next Breath*

Recently, a medical secretary at a doctor's office called the MediAppS office wondering if MediAppS could help with the cost of an albuterol inhaler for a patient without prescription drug insurance. After a few brief questions about income and residency, I told the medical secretary to have Edward (not his real name) stop by the Catholic Charities office. Moments after ending the phone conversation, the physician was on the phone, asking if we could also help with a more expensive inhaler that would truly help Edward with his newly diagnosed breathing condition of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), a chronic and progressive disease without a known cure.

I explained to the physician that both brand-name inhalers were available through the pharmaceutical company's patient assistance program. After some quick paperwork at my office, Edward was able to receive an immediate one-month supply of both brand-name medications at the local pharmacy. The medications were purchased with a voucher from the pharmaceutical company. During the next month, working with Edward and his physician, I enrolled him in the pharmaceutical company's patient assistance program, which would provide Edward with a 90-day supply of both medications every quarter for an entire year. The two medications in total would have cost nearly \$400.00 a month. This far exceeded Edward's available resources.

After we secured this solution, Edward confided in me that not knowing when his next breath of air was coming was very frightening. However, he continued, affording the two brand-name medications without prescription drug coverage on a fixed-income was absolutely terrifying. Overjoyed and relieved, Edward was extremely grateful for the help he received from his medical provider and MediAppS, which eased both his breathing and his budget.

## *How Can MediAppS Work for You?*

A phone call to MediAppS can provide you with cost-saving tips and suggestions that you can discuss with your medical provider. It is important to note that each pharmaceutical company has its own guidelines in regard to participation in its patient assistance program, such as the type of medication that is available, income limits and insurance status. To make an appointment, contact the MediAppS office in Winona at 507-454-2270 extension 245.