

This is the story of two men who served in the United States Military.

My husband, Jim, and I lived in Canada for seven years. I was able to locate a doctor who was accepting new patients and I went in for an interview to see if the doctor and I would be compatible. I wanted a doctor who would listen to my concerns and the physician wanted a patient who would listen to advice and follow instructions on how to keep healthy. I set up an appointment for Jim, who he felt totally unnecessary, 'why go to a doctor if I'm not sick'? At the appointment the doctor told Jim that he should come in on a regular basis for testing and monitoring, and they set up a schedule of 6 weeks as Jim was 65. At the first check-up the doctor did testing that uncovered the first stages of type II diabetes. He prescribed a glucose monitor and test strips. When Jim got the prescription filled, the pharmacist took a lot of time explaining how the monitor worked and how to do a test. She said that the Province of Ontario pays a pharmacist for the time to fully explain new medical devices and prescriptions so patients will have a full understanding of how and why something works. At the second visit the doctor informed Jim that the PSAT test he had done at the last visit had shown the possibility of cancer. He sent him to a urologist who ordered a biopsy after an examination. The biopsy came back positive for cancer, so Jim was referred to a urologic surgeon. The surgeon referred us to a nurse practitioner who explained how the surgery would affect him and explained several exercises to tighten muscles. Meanwhile, the surgeon's office contacted the hospital and scheduled the operating room. From initial diagnosis to surgery was about 6 weeks. My husband a veteran of the United States Navy had no symptoms or indication of cancer, but due to the preventative care he received in Canada is now cancer free.

Back in the United States, a dear friend was having a hard time catching his breath and would cough uncontrollably. When we questioned why he didn't see a doctor for treatment, the response was without insurance, I cannot see a doctor. One evening he collapsed and his wife rushed him to the emergency room. He was evaluated and promptly admitted for further testing. His wife was sick with worry over her husband's illness and how they were going to pay the medical bills. Her worry caused her body to weaken to the point where she contracted pneumonia and had a series of small strokes. She did not seek medical attention, because any money would have to go towards her husband's mounting bills. The doctors determined that our friend had advanced lung cancer that was quickly spreading throughout his body. When released from the hospital, he contacted the nearest veterans' administration hospital for his follow up care and cancer treatment. The VA hospital was almost an hours drive from their home which further weakened an already sick man. Our friend died within 10 months of his diagnosis and his widow is fearful of losing her home to pay for the medical bills. She also is disabled from the strokes she had suffered which had to go untreated. This man was a veteran of the United States Air Force having served in Vietnam. He died because he did not have medical insurance in the country he so bravely fought for.

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