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“PriceCheck” Project To Lift Veil on Real Health Care Costs

Two Florida Public Media groups partner for health price transparency

TAMPA and MIAMI – (February 11, 2016) How much is a chest X-ray? It is a simple question with a variety of answers depending upon where the X-ray is done, if you have health insurance, what your co-pay and deductible are, and if you pay cash. Health care pricing is a maze of money that is confusing, complex and costly.

Florida is one of the largest health care markets in the world, and yet the real costs people pay for medical procedures often remain a mystery, particularly to anyone trying to research their options before seeking care.

[WLRN Public Media](#) in South Florida, [WUSF Public Media](#) in Tampa Bay and [ClearHealthCosts.com](#) are teaming up for “**PriceCheck**.” It will be a free online tool allowing Florida residents to share data on how much they pay for medical procedures. This will help create a groundbreaking crowdsourced database of health care prices so consumers and experts can search and compare prices among health care providers.

PriceCheck will be a community-created database, compiling individual health cost information for common medical procedures and supplies ranging from a back MRI to a sleep study. **PriceCheck** promises to be the first database on real health care costs in Florida that is created by the public, for the public, and is presented in a format that’s easy and accessible to use.

The system will walk consumers with insurance, and those who self-pay, through an easy, step-by-step process to contribute data such as insurance co-pays, deductible costs and the amount an insurance plan pays for procedures. Names and contact information for anyone providing their cost information will be kept confidential.

Consumers across Florida also will be able to search for comparable prices for health procedures on the tool, which will be hosted on HealthNewsFlorida.org, WUSFNews.org and WLRN.org. By using zip codes, patients will have access to the growing database of prices in their areas.

Already under development, the online tool is scheduled to launch in April.

“This is a real opportunity to help consumers break down confusing medical bills, and help others in their community know how much medical procedures really cost,” said Mary Shedden, news director of WUSF Public Media in Tampa.

It also will allow journalists at WLRN and WUSF to look deeply into the issues (using anonymous data) and develop stories that will illuminate discrepancies and spark conversations.

“Increasingly, consumers want to know how much their health care will cost before they get treatment,” said WLRN Vice President of News Tom Hudson. “PriceCheck will provide a window into health costs beyond out-of-pocket expenses like co-pays and deductibles, to better understand the supply and demand of services driving the ever-increasing cost of health care.”

Jeanne Pinder, founder and CEO of ClearHealthCosts.com, said: “People should know what things cost in health care. We’ll use the power of our communities to reveal the secrets of the marketplace, and join hands to make this opaque system more transparent.”

About WLRN Public Media

WLRN Public Media is committed to being the most trusted source of information and entertainment in South Florida's diverse community. Licensed to the school board of Miami-Dade County, WLRN is best known for its award winning public radio and television programs, but its services go well beyond the airwaves. It's a complex media enterprise consisting of radio and television stations, www.WLRN.org and educational channels offering you a variety of high quality programming and advanced learning services making WLRN a valuable public media source.

About WUSF Public Media

WUSF Public Media is a comprehensive media organization that provides media services to the community and businesses through public broadcasting and multimedia production services. Licensed to the University of South Florida, WUSF Public Media serves the public interest through programming, educational outreach and community partnerships. For more information, visit www.wusf.org.

About ClearHealthCosts

ClearHealthCosts.com is a New York City startup bringing transparency to the healthcare marketplace by telling people what stuff costs. Using a combination of shoe-leather journalism, database sourcing and curation, crowdsourcing and partnering, ClearHealthCosts.com is revealing the secrets of an opaque marketplace, and seeking to help solve one of the biggest problems we face as a nation. For more, visit clearhealthcosts.com.

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