



September 11, 2023

Comment Intake—Request for Information Regarding Medical Payment Products  
Consumer Financial Protection Bureau  
1700 G Street NW  
Washington, DC 20552

**Re: Request for Information Regarding Medical Credit Cards, Docket No. CFPB–2023–0038, Docket No. CMS–2023–0106, and Docket No. TREAS–DO–2023–0008**

Dear CFPB, HHS and the Department of Treasury,

Consumer Reports<sup>1</sup> appreciates this opportunity to comment on the CFPB/HHS/Department of the Treasury Request for Information regarding medical payment products. Medical credit cards and payment plans can be very helpful in some circumstances to help patients pay for medical expenses not covered by other sources of payment. But the aggressive expansion and marketing of high-cost credit products for use at the point of treatment raises many serious concerns, given the very large number of Americans who are already carrying high levels of medical debt. These concerns include:

- higher overall costs for receiving care, because of added financing charges and fees;
- inadequate public and private insurance coverage for vital medical benefits such as dental, hearing and vision;
- potential substitution of high-cost credit products for payments that could be covered by insurance, hospital financial assistance, public programs and/or lower-cost payment plans;
- increases in medical billing and payment complexity for consumers;
- patient difficulties in understanding the full range of payment options, when offered high-cost credit products at the point of service and during the treatment process;
- potential risks from debt collection, adverse credit reporting, and medical debt lawsuits and garnishments;
- promotion of more expensive care options driven by provider financial incentives; and

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<sup>1</sup> Consumer Reports is an independent, nonprofit membership organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer, and healthier world. For 83 years, CR has provided evidence-based product testing and ratings, rigorous research, hard-hitting investigative journalism, public education, and steadfast policy action on behalf of consumers' interests. Unconstrained by advertising, CR has exposed landmark public health and safety issues and strives to be a catalyst for pro-consumer changes in the marketplace. From championing responsible auto safety standards, to winning food and water protections, to enhancing healthcare quality, to fighting back against predatory lenders in the financial markets, Consumer Reports has always been on the front lines, raising the voices of consumers

- promotion of questionable or unnecessary treatments by providers, who receive direct payment from consumers.

As documented by research by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), medical debt is already a serious national problem afflicting 100 million Americans (41% of the population). It is one of the most prevalent forms of personal debt, with one in five Americans being contacted by a debt collector over an unpaid healthcare bill.<sup>2</sup> According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, twenty percent of Americans also have at least one medical debt collection item in their credit reports, and over half of collection items on credit reports are for medical debts.<sup>3</sup> The problem disproportionately affects people of color: 28% of African Americans and 22% of Latinx people carry medical debt versus 17% of White people.<sup>4</sup>

According to a national KFF survey, two-thirds of adults with medical debt said that they or a member of their household have put off getting needed medical care because of costs.<sup>6</sup> The personal and collective impact of healthcare debt on individuals and families is staggering in its scope and severity:

- Sixty-three percent of respondents with current or recent medical debt said it caused them to cut spending on food, clothing, utilities, and other basics.
- Forty-eight percent of people with medical debt said that they had used up all or most of their savings to pay it off.
- Two-thirds of adults with medical debt said that they or a member of their household have put off getting needed medical care because of costs.
- One out of seven respondents said that they have been denied care by a medical provider because of unpaid bills.
- Eleven percent or so of adults with medical debt said that they had been forced to declare bankruptcy at some time in their life.
- Six percent of Americans with medical debt said that they have lost their home due to eviction or foreclosure at least in part because of that debt.

Medical debt undermines the ability of individuals and households to have stable incomes, avoid financial stress and poverty, and achieve economic stability. In addition, medical debt in itself can cause sickness. “Medical debt and associated financial hardship are likely to be associated with substantial adverse health effects,” wrote Dr. Carlos Mendes de Leon and Dr. Jennifer J. Griggs in a July 2021 recent

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<sup>2</sup> Sara R. Collins et al., The Commonwealth Fund, *Insuring the Future: Current Trends in Health Coverage and the Effects of Implementing the Affordable Care Act 6* (Apr. 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, *Consumer credit reports: A study of medical and non-medical collections* (Dec. 11, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Lunna Lopes et al., “Health Care Debt in the U.S: The Broad Consequences of Medical And Dental Bills,” Kaiser Family Foundation, June 16, 2022, [kff.org/health-costs/report/kff-health-care-debt-survey/](https://www.kff.org/health-costs/report/kff-health-care-debt-survey/). See, also, Noam N. Levey, “100 Million People in America Are Saddled With Health Care Debt,” *Kaiser Health News*, June 16, 2022, [khn.org/news/article/diagnosis-debt-investigation-100million-americans-hidden-medical-debt/](https://www.khn.org/news/article/diagnosis-debt-investigation-100million-americans-hidden-medical-debt/); and Noam N. Levey et al., “Upended: How Medical Debt Changed Their Lives,” *Kaiser Health News*, June 16, 2022; updated December 21, 2022, [khn.org/news/article/diagnosis-debt-investigation-faces-of-medicaldebt/](https://www.khn.org/news/article/diagnosis-debt-investigation-faces-of-medicaldebt/).

editorial published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. “Medical debt may compromise seeking or receiving appropriate medical care that may lead to delayed diagnosis of health conditions or exacerbations in preexisting conditions and may potentially contribute to increased risk of premature mortality. There is also clear evidence for a link of personal debt and financial hardship with poor mental health, which in the case of medical debt could worsen the adverse effects of medical conditions on mental health or vice versa.”<sup>5</sup>

As noted by the National Consumer Law Center, “...Medical debt is different from many other types of consumer debt -- people do not plan to get sick or get hurt, and health care services are not only necessary, but can be a matter of life or death. Also, medical bills often end up in collections because of insurance or billing disputes, or other problems that arise from having a third party payor involved in the payment of bills.”<sup>6</sup>

**In this context, it is important to understand that medical credit cards and payment plans are wrapping around a medical billing system that is already both highly confusing and difficult to navigate.** Pricing is opaque and insurance payments are bewildering. Often, patients receive multiple bills and insurance forms for the same visit, which are hard to decipher and interpret, especially for non-native speakers. Providers and insurers go back and forth over whether a particular treatment or service is covered by the patient’s insurance, and the patient is caught in the middle. Frequently, providers go ahead and send bills to collection even while they are still arguing with the insurance company as to whether the service is covered or not.

US consumers also experience high rates of surprise billing for out-of-network care in emergency rooms, hospitals and outpatient facilities. While the No Surprises Act (NSA) went into effect on January 1, 2022, consumers continue to receive surprise bills of various kinds, especially for ground ambulance transports, which were not covered by the new federal protections. Before the law passed, the KFF had reported that one-third of consumers had received a surprise bill in the previous two years.<sup>7</sup> While 16% of respondents said they received a surprise bill because the provider was out of network (an issue addressed by the NSA), 15% said they received the surprise bill “for another reason.”

Notably, four in ten adults aged 18-64 said they could not afford to pay a surprise bill over \$500 at the time of service. While 21% said they could put the bill on a credit card and pay it off over time, 6% said they could borrow money to pay it off, and 4% said they could arrange a payment plan to pay to down,

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<sup>5</sup> Carlos F. Mendes de Leon and Jennifer J. Griggs, *Medical Debt as a Social Determinant of Health*, Journal of the American Medical Association 326, no. 3 (July 20, 2021): 228–29.

<sup>6</sup> Chi Chi Wu, Jenifer Bosco, and April Kuehnhoff, *Model Medical Debt Protection Act* (Boston, MA: National Consumer Law Center, September 2019), p.2, available at: <https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/model-medical-debt-protection-act082017.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Lopes, L., et al., *Data Note: Public Worries About and Experience With Surprise Medical Bills*, Kaiser Family Foundation, 2/28/20, available at: <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/poll-finding/data-note-public-worries-about-and-experience-with-surprise-medical-bills/>

14% said they would not be able to afford to pay it at all. Seven in ten lower-income adults with household income less than \$40,000 said they could not afford to pay a surprise medical bill of \$500.

Many consumers are also enrolled in high-deductible plans that require patients to come up with substantial additional funds for deductibles and copayments. According to a 2019 survey by the KFF and the Los Angeles Times, 40 percent of people with employer-based coverage said they had problems affording their healthcare cost sharing, premiums, and medical expenses for themselves or a family member.<sup>8</sup> Many households do not have enough liquid savings to pay for the typical deductible costs of \$2,000 for single-person households and \$4,000 for multi-person households.<sup>9</sup>

After billing, providers or their collection entities often send unpaid accounts to third-party credit reporting agencies. These reporting agencies do not have access to provider and insurance records and make it difficult for patients—or their creditors—to either confirm the accuracy of their debt or to make corrections if there is a billing reporting error. Reporting of medical debts to credit bureaus has very serious negative implications for patients; a bad credit record can make it much more expensive or even impossible for a patient to rent a home, get a job, buy a car, insure a car or home, or secure a loan for a home repair or educational opportunity.

Aggressive collection practices can therefore ratchet up the price of care far beyond the actual cost of delivering the procedure or service, and consumers are subject to additional interest charges on the debt that may exceed the value of the debt itself.

Hospitals, medical providers, credit card companies and others who hold medical debt in collections can also file collection lawsuits against patients. If they win and obtain a court judgment, they can then use a variety of onerous collection tools—depending on state law—such as “seeking liens on homes, wage garnishment, tax refund garnishment, attachment and seizure of bank accounts, and even . . . civil arrest warrants when debtors fail to show up for court proceedings.”<sup>10</sup> Typically, when the medical provider or hospital obtains a court judgment, the debtor is neither present nor represented by counsel to give their side of the story.

About 1 in 7 adults who have had health care debt say they’ve been threatened with a lawsuit or arrest, according a nationwide KFF poll.<sup>11</sup> Further, one out of twenty (5 percent) people with medical debt said

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<sup>8</sup> Liz Hamel, Cailey Muñana, and Mollyann Brodie, *Kaiser Family Foundation/LA Times Survey Of Adults With Employer-Sponsored Health Insurance* (San Francisco, CA: Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation, May 2019), available at: <https://www.kff.org/private-insurance/report/kaiser-family-foundation-la-times-survey-of-adults-with-employer-sponsored-insurance/>

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Young et al., *How Many People Have Enough Money To Afford Private Insurance Cost Sharing?*, Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker, March 10, 2022, available at: <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/many-households-do-not-have-enough-money-to-pay-cost-sharing-typical-in-private-health-plans/>

<sup>10</sup> Berneta L. Haynes, *The Racial Health and Wealth Gap: Impact of Medical Debt on Black Families* (Boston, MA: National Consumer Law Center, March 2022), available at: [nclc.org/resources/the-racial-health-and-wealth-gap/](https://nclc.org/resources/the-racial-health-and-wealth-gap/)

<sup>11</sup> Noam Levey, *Nursing homes are suing friends and family to collect on patients’ bills*, All Things Considered, NPR, July 28, 2022, [npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/07/28/1113134049/nursing-homes-are-suing-friends-and-family-to-collect-on-patients-bills](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/07/28/1113134049/nursing-homes-are-suing-friends-and-family-to-collect-on-patients-bills)

that they had been sued by a medical provider, collection agency, or debt buyer for a past-due medical or dental bill.<sup>12</sup>

Many nonprofit hospitals have charity care and financial assistance programs, but do not consistently and reliably inform eligible patients that they could qualify for free or discounted care. “Patients are often unable to negotiate to lower their bills or establish a reasonable repayment plan,” leading to higher debts that are then sent to collectors and reported to credit reporting agencies.<sup>13</sup>

Recent research on rising costs has documented significant gaps in insurance coverage that are resulting in more expense that must be covered by individual patients. For example, the Kaiser Family Foundation reported in 2021 that many Medicare beneficiaries face high annual out-of-pocket costs for dental and hearing care, services that generally aren’t covered in traditional Medicare, but sometimes are partially covered through Medicare Advantage plans. “...The analysis shows that, among beneficiaries who used each type of service, average annual out-of-pocket spending was \$914 for hearing care and \$874 for dental care in 2018, but considerably less (\$230) for vision care. **Among those who were in the top 10 percent in terms of their out-of-pocket costs for such services, 2.7 million beneficiaries spent \$2,136 or more on their dental care, while 360,000 beneficiaries spent \$3,600 or more on hearing services.**”<sup>14</sup>

According to KFF:

“...The analysis also found that people on Medicare in communities of color, with disabilities, or with low incomes are disproportionately likely to have difficulty getting these services. About 16 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries reported in 2019 that there was a time in the last year that they could not get dental, hearing, or vision care, but this was reported by a greater percentage of beneficiaries under age 65 with long-term disabilities (35%); those enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid (35%); with low incomes (e.g., 31% for those with income under \$10,000); and Black and Hispanic beneficiaries (25% and 22%, respectively).”

### **Consumer Experiences Using Medical Credit Cards and Payment Plans**

To learn more about the consumer experience of medical credit cards and medical payment plans, in August 2023 Consumer Reports asked its members to share their stories regarding their use of these products. We collected over 80 comments from consumers. Selected comments regarding a variety of different types of fees in the marketplace are provided below, and the full selection of consumer comments is attached to this letter.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Quynh Chi Nguyen and Mark Rukavina, *A Path Toward Ending Medical Debt: A Look At State Efforts* (Boston, MA: Community Catalyst, December 2021), p.5.

<sup>14</sup> *Many Medicare Beneficiaries Face High Out of Pocket Costs for Dental and Hearing Care, Whether in Traditional Medicare or Medicare Advantage*, news release, 9/21/21, Kaiser Family Foundation, available at: <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/press-release/many-medicare-beneficiaries-face-high-out-of-pocket-costs-for-dental-and-hearing-care-whether-in-traditional-medicare-or-medicare-advantage/>

About half of the consumers who shared their experiences reported that medical credit cards could be helpful in paying for medical expenses or veterinary care that was not covered by insurance. Many consumers said specifically they had used medical credit cards such as CareCredit, and pointed out that they were careful to limit their use of the card to the promotional period of 0%, being highly aware that they were incur stiff interest charges if they failed to pay back the entire balance by the end of the promotional period. For these consumers, it appeared that many of the payments were for dental or elective care that is not covered by insurance payments.

Terri from Kentucky told us:

I have used CareCredit several times for dental procedures. However, I have always been diligent when making payments as to avoid interest charges. That's the key, because the finance charges can be ridiculous.

Billy from Texas said:

We use our medical credit card often, as we rarely have the funds to pay all out of pocket expenses up front. CareCredit gave us several months to pay those bills with 0% interest and that is helpful. I don't know what we would do without it.

Patty from Florida said:

I have used my CareCredit credit card several times over the past 15 years and am a very satisfied customer! It has taken the strain off of paying some of my larger medical, dental and veterinary bills by spreading the payments out over a 6-12 month period – INTEREST FREE. I am very grateful for the service, and recognize that I am also very fortunate to be able to make my payments by the due date.

However, several consumers who shared stories with Consumer Reports expressed concern that using high-cost medical credit cards posed significant risks that they might not always be able to manage in the future.

Gary from Arizona said:

We, my wife and I, have both used the Care Credit Card for mostly eye glasses and cataract surgery. It was 0% interest for a year. We paid it off on time so as not to have pay any interest. For us it worked fairly well. ***But it would be easy for someone to make the mistake of not paying it off in the given period of time and then having to pay a very high price for the accrued interest.***

Angela from Virginia said she limited her use of CareCredit to “vet bills only,” but was concerned that her pet might continue to need additional services:

I have used care credit for many years, as if I spend more than \$200 at the vet, I get free financing for 6 months. However, we have had some very high emergency bills, and if that bill isn't paid off in exactly 6 months, we pay almost 30% in interest fees which goes back to the date of purchase and accumulates. ***I have about \$2,000 on my card right now, and every time I pay a chunk off, something else happens to a pet.***

Chelsea from California said:

We have had to use medical credit cards many times, when we couldn't afford to pay for things like dental surgery. ***But it's a dangerous game in this country where there is no universal health care... There's a part of me that does not want to use them, because I know the way they make money is by betting on the people they know will not be able to pay them off on time, and will pay the interest rates that skyrocket after the grace period.***

Nikki from Alabama told us:

***Ultimately, however, it's a distressing state of affairs that we should have to use these types of cards as often as we do.*** They should be for 'major emergencies' - such was the case when I first started using the Care Credit card. But now routine veterinarian care is so costly that I have to use the Care Credit multiple times per year & end up facing balances that leave me depressed. I can see this would be the case with medical or dental care for myself, too. But I have so far avoided using the Care Credit for personal medical / dental expenses. So far!

### **Avoiding High Interest Charges by “Doing Your Own Math”**

Many consumers who used CareCredit or other credit cards said they carefully reviewed billing statements and increased their monthly payments to avoid being subject to deferred interest charges. About one quarter they had trouble understanding the billing statements they received.

Leada from Texas urged other consumers “Read the Fine Print and Do Your Own Math”:

Mann Eye Institute was eager to sign me up for Synchrony Bank's Care Credit to help pay for my cataract surgery by promising 18 months interest free and no fees. Fortunately, one of the first pieces of information Care Credit emailed me after I signed up displayed the 26% interest charge. That put me on notice to make sure I was done paying by the end of the 18 months. ***Of course, the minimum payment they ask for is not adequate to accomplish that, [so] I did my own math to determine my monthly payment.*** There was no fee to sign up, and paying attention to the details made it possible for it to truly be interest free.

Eugene from Texas advised to closely “watch the payment schedule”:

I borrowed \$20,000 at 0% interest for 24 months. If not paid in full by then the interest rate would be over 26%! ***The minimum payment that they recommended would not have paid it off in a timely manner and I assume that the exorbitant interest rate would have kicked in. I***

***raised my minimum payment to ensure that it is paid off in 20 months. The devil is in the details so double check your math.***

Rachel from Florida said:

I am in the middle of paying off my newest hearing aids. This is the first time I have done this (but 5th pair of hearing aids). There is no interest if pay off in a year or the interest skyrockets. So CareCredit encourages you to pay in small increments which will end in a high interest at year end. ***Be careful and pay what I consider three to four times as much as they request to finish the pay off in 12 months.***

Chelsea from California said:

The way we've gotten around the ballooning high interest rates is by creating a schedule: we divide the amount due into monthly payments, and ***we pad those payments to be sure we pay it off a month ahead of schedule, to make sure that we pay it off on time, avoiding the ultra-high interest rate that occurs at the end of the grace period.*** We have never paid a dime of interest and sometimes I wonder why they keep giving us these lines of credit.

### **High Charges for Deferred Interest**

Several consumers told us that they had incurred very large interest charges after missing the deadline to make all payments by the end of the promotional period for medical credit cards.

Amanda from North Carolina said:

I needed a crown and my dentist office suggested credit card. I noticed that I had paid it down to around \$500 two different times, and before I knew it, it was back up to \$1000 again. This has been going on for three years now. It should have been paid off two years ago. It's like going to a pawnshop.

Paula from Florida told us:

I was under the impression that the dental insurance plan that I had through medicaid would pay for a root canal and crown, was told that it was only for people under 26 years of age-I am a senior citizen and needed the procedure. The dentist recommended by my insurance company said that I could get Care Credit to pay and that I would have 18 months interest free to pay the bill. I faithfully paid the bill monthly with more than the requested amount was down to around \$700.00 and then the next month the bill rose to \$1400.00 because the interest was then charged. I called them and said that I would gladly pay the interest on the remaining \$700.00 and they said I had to pay the interest for the entire \$2300.00 which was what the dentist charged even though I had paid them more than the minimum amount on time every month. I feel that I have been charged excessively-have continued to pay them more than the minimum



every month and am finally down to \$700.00 again.

**I hope to get this paid off soon and I will never use this way to pay a bill again; I would rather be in pain and suffer rather than pay the exorbitant interest charged to me.** I may be old, but when you pay faithfully and pay at least \$100. per month on a bill, you would think that even though the 18-month window had passed, that you would not be charged for interest on the original balance that is in my opinion most unfair.

Tamara from Arizona said her mother had experienced a “CareCredit nightmare” as expenses not covered by Medicare continued to be charged to her card:

My mom took out a Care Credit card after she went through treatment for breast cancer. Even though her Medicare insurance paid most of the expenses, it did not cover dental or the expensive medication she had to take for several years after the initial lumpectomy. Side effects from the medication caused bone loss, especially in her jaw. On top of this she fell and knocked her front teeth out. This past year she's needed over \$12,000 in dental work. Care Credit increased her interest rate from 22% to 29% which increased the monthly payment to over \$500.

***When she contacted Care Credit about a way to lower the payments, she was told Care Credit does not offer a reduced monthly payment plan and there was nothing they could/would do. Now I'm helping to pay her monthly payment and the dental work continues. I honestly don't see a way out of this.***

David from Montana explained that he also was charged high fees on his medical credit card:

Some needed dental work [was] recently done in July, 2023 without any significant insurance coverage and no payment plan through my dentist other than the "Care Credit" credit card. This company touts no interest payments on procedures paid in full within an 18-month period but there is an underlying "card security" fee charged monthly based on outstanding balance. **On a \$9,300 balance and making more than the minimum payment in one billing cycle I was charged \$332 in card security fees and my balance was undiminished by any noticeable difference.** To retire this bill without paying any interest (which is false) I would have to pay more than twice the minimum payment each month for the 18-month period while all along having paid their hidden junk fees to the tune of a couple thousand dollars. This not a Caring Company!!

### **High Costs for Dental Care and Hearing Aids**

A number of consumers told us that they were exposed to high costs for dental care and hearing aids, because of no or limited insurance coverage for these important forms of health care. These stories

were concerning because they underscore that the financing gaps for health care are both deep and wide, for many essential needs.

Gail from Michigan said:

...I have used a medical credit card. It is one that allows a year or 6 months to pay for it without interest. After that the interest rate is high. I have to use one every time I need to get something completed on my teeth that my insurance does not cover. Like dental implants. I can't have bridges they don't work in the back of your mouth when your tooth splits apart from the silver fillings. The tooth causes pain, and must be removed. You have to have an implant. those are very, very expensive. So, I have to use my medical card. ***I pray that I can have it paid for by one year. I have to give up some things to get it paid for so I'm not charged interest. I have had to have four dental implants to date. I've used the card every single time, and then I also had to use the credit card for the crown that is not included with the implant.*** That's another thousand dollars. I'm on a fixed income I'm a 71 years old and I've retired schoolteacher.

Edgar from New York said he was concerned about the high costs of dental care that make the cards necessary:

The finance company is not the problem. ***The real problem was the price of the procedure.*** My wife had a similar diagnosis, but she took a different route. She said she could fly to Bogota and do the procedure for a fraction of the cost. She got on a plane and paid \$800 for a round trip plane ticket, stayed at a 5-star hotel for \$700 and had the \$495 identical procedure from one of the top oral surgeons in the country. In total she spent \$1995 including flight and hotel while here in the USA I paid \$3,000 for just the procedure. The fact that the procedure itself costs six times as much in the USA for inferior work is the real problem. The US medical system is out of control, and the only thing that can fix it is a Universal Health Care System.

Ruben from Washington expressed concern about the large gaps and exclusions in insurance and Medicare, which hit the aging and people with high health care needs especially hard.

I've had my medical/dental/vision insurance coverage for over 50 years. And my medical coverage has been wonderful over the years, especially battling life medical emergencies. I've used my dental and vision coverage for regular cleaning and checkups and had to pay a small portion of the cost, as expected. But in my aging years, I've had major dental work done over the last couple of years and find that my dental coverage fails to cover for them as expected, as I had to put out thousands of dollars out of pocket. Fortunately, I have the funds to do this.

***But not all members are able to do this. It's when we have major dental work is when we expect insurance to help us.*** My vision coverage is also very poor in coverage. I use it every two years for checkups and new glasses. But I cover the majority of the cost of these services. ***Insurance coverage is decent while using them for routine services. But when it comes down to***

***major work, they fail to cover much. This needs to change. Retired seniors mostly live off limited income and need insurance to help thru the major medical needs.***

Douglas from Minnesota expressed concern that high-cost credit was inappropriate for financing expensive hearing aids:

I am and have been hearing impaired since childhood ( I am now over 70). Over the years beginning in my mid-thirties advancements in hearing loss diagnosis and hearing aid technology have enabled me to acquire my first hearing aid I have worn two hearing aids ever since. The difference is my quality of life, as you might imagine, is remarkable. Today without my hearing aids I would be functionally, as well as legally, deaf.

However, the continuing advancements in hearing aid technology have come at a price - the cost of hearing aids can easily exceed two thousand dollars each. Not many people have what could amount to four thousand dollars available to them to purchase two aids at the time they need to replace their existing aids (every few years) as their hearing continues to decline or they are prescribed for the first time; hence medical credit cards are the only option if personal savings are inadequate (please note that hearing aids are not generally covered by medical insurance or through Medicare).

Medical credit cards also have a cost beyond the purchase price and professional services of an audiologist. The purchase price through a medical credit card, often available only through the dispenser, in my experience, is at an interest rate of 24-29% annually. ***This is much too high when medically and practically necessary and places a financial burden on the wearer which could almost exceed the cost of the aid(s) themselves over time.***

### **Use of Credit Cards to Finance Costs That Should Be Covered by Insurance**

Relatively few of the stories we received discussed problems regarding payments the may have been covered by insurance coverage. However, Rebecca from Virginia described some hospital-related billing problems in a story she sent CR in 2022:

I had my second hand surgery on February 22nd of 2022 the hospital said that we would owe over \$2,500 after the insurance. We applied for a Care Credit Card that covered \$2,400 and they agreed to take two payments of \$83 and some change using my debit card on the 22nd of March and the 22nd of April.

***As it turns out we were way over paying for the procedure I had done.*** The Care Credit Card was owed back \$1,255 and on March 7th there was a deduction of \$196 out of my bank twice the amount agreed upon in 2 weeks early. I called the surgical center talk to the business department they recognized the mistake said give me two weeks I'll have a check in the mail. Two weeks later they took out another \$83 from my account I called again still not having

received the first payment that I was due. They said everything was recognized, unsure why it didn't go through, but you are going to get a check for the full amount by April 7th. On April 1st I got a letter from them in the mail saying that the money was put toward my CareCredit card, the credit card that we got to cover deductibles and co-pays for me to have the procedure to start with.

How is it legally or morally right to take money from someone and say, "oh I'm not going to give it back to you, I'm going to pay this business that helps us." It's my money [and] I decide what to do with it. They refunded CareCredit but now they're also giving CareCredit money that they owe me, money that was Cash directly taken from me. How is that fair, how is that legal?

Another consumer, E \_\_\_\_\_ from Missouri, reported that a dental provider set up a payment plan for them, even though the costs were later covered by insurance:

Had dental insurance, knew it would not cover everything needed, went to Aspen Dental for service. After consultation submitted insurance and paid copay. Returned for procedure and when finished set up payment plan through the office. After three months of on time payments they set me up with an installment plan through a third party with out my consent. I continued making my payments, on time, at the office where services were rendered. Two months later I received a notice from the third party that they were sending my account to collections. By this time my bill was paid in full. Upon investigation of my payments and insurance payment I discovered that I had over paid due to Aspen Dental resubmitting additional information to insurance company.

### **Other Types of Payment Plans**

Several consumers said they had benefited from other types of health care financing provided by hospitals, at lower interest rates. These plans are generally much less expensive and safer for consumers when they have bills they can't pay off right away.

For example, Kevin from New Hampshire told us:

I'm a patient of Mass General Brigham in Boston, MA. Brigham has always offered an installment plan to pay off deductible or coinsurance amounts not covered my medical insurance. It's 0% and they ask you to pay off in 2 or 3 years. Having been a patient for the past 5 years, I've probably only paid off once or twice. I never get any grief about adding my latest visit balance to the plan. No discount is offered to payoff sooner. I can also includes balances from Dana Farber Cancer Institute on the same installment plan.

Raymond from North Carolina said:

6 years ago during a winter storm had a pain in my left elbow. This was about 2 hours after I had taken a blow to the back. Told my wife I needed to go to the emergency room to check it out. It was indeed a heart attack but they did not have a surgeon who could handle it so I was sent by a specialized ambulance to their main hospital. Had a stent inserted into my right

coronary artery and went home 48 hours later. About 7 to 10 days later got a huge bill for all charges. Called the billing department and they told me that they had submitted the bills and not to pay anything until all insurance had replied to what they would cover. About 75% was covered by insurance and the rest was mine. Called the hospital billing department and was told that we could set up a plan and there would be no interest if payments were made as agreed to. Over the following 18 months I made my payments and was never charged a penny in interest.

Steven from California also used a 0% hospital payment plan:

I just set up a payment plan, CARE. I have been in the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, CHOMP often in 2022 and 2023. Triple bypass last year, gallbladder removal this past June and I have a kyphoplasty scheduled for next week. Last year I was given a full sponsorship after my bypass. All the co-pays were forgiven. This year, no sponsorship. CHOMP contracts with CARE so I can make payments without interest. I still have to pay my part but don't get penalized with huge interest rates.

### **Buy Now Pay Later Plans**

Consumer Reports recently reviewed Buy Now Pay Later plans for privacy, transparency and security as part of our digital finance evaluation work.<sup>15</sup> Among other findings, we found that the apps do not always clearly disclose applicable interest rates and fees, when consumer sign up. Full transparency about the terms and conditions is vital for any BNPL plans that are offered for financing of medical expenses, at the point of signup. We have also produced two white policy papers on Buy Now Pay Later plans: *Buy Now Pay Later: Consumer Protection Needed for the Popular New Way to Pay* (November, 2022)<sup>16</sup>; and *Buy Now Pay Later: Policy Measures to Mitigate Consumer Risks from Evolving Business Practices* (July 2023),<sup>17</sup> which outline a large range of consumer protections that medical BNPL plans should be required to meet.

### **Recommendations**

Given that the number of Americans facing medical debts in the U.S. is already at a crisis level of over 100 million, it is imperative to consider ways to prevent patients from taking on even greater levels of medical debt, through the routine operation of the medical care system, its provider networks, and their billing and payment collection arms.

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<sup>15</sup> Gill, Lisa. *Buy Now Pay Later Apps Are Popular, But Are They Safe?* Consumer Reports, May 25, 2023. Available at: <https://www.consumerreports.org/short-term-lending/buy-now-pay-later-apps-are-popular-but-are-they-safe-a7441154279/>

<sup>16</sup> Bell, Charles. *Buy Now Pay Later: Consumer Protections Needed for the Popular New Way to Pay*, Consumer Reports, November 2022, available at <https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/FINAL-Buy-Now-Pay-Later-Consumer-Protections-Needed-for-the-Popular-New-Way-To-Pay-White-Paper.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Chien, Jennifer. *Buy Now Pay Later: Policy Measures to Mitigate Consumer Risks from Evolving Business Practices*, Consumer Reports, July, 2023. Available at: <https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/BNPL-Policy-White-Paper.pdf>

- We urge the CFPB, the HHS and the Department of the Treasury to investigate ways to ensure that 0% interest or low-cost payment plans can be made widely available throughout the health delivery system where consumers are receiving medical care, as a default go-to alternative to high-cost credit products that charge APRs in the range of 25-30%. We need to ensure that the core parts of the delivery system – primary care, hospital care, outpatient, ambulatory care and surgical facilities, urgent care centers, and dental, hearing and vision services – are **financially safe for patients**, and do not put them at risk of incurring high-cost medical debt for routine, essential care.
- The need for such plans is also underscored by the high and escalating costs of dental, vision and hearing services for the elderly and people with disabilities. We need safe, affordable low-cost financing as a basic safety feature in the health care financing system, so that the routine use of medical care does not result in or exacerbate crippling medical debt.
- We urge the HHS to investigate ways to expand Medicare and Medicaid coverage for essential dental, hearing and vision services, and to investigate ways to expand insurance coverage or financial assistance for elective health care.
- We appreciate that much stronger consumer protections are needed for the specific credit cards and payment plans, as described by National Consumer Law Center in their excellent report, *Health Care Plastic: The Risks of Medical Credit Cards*.<sup>18</sup> As argued by the NCLC, the CFPB should prohibit deferred interest for medical credit cards and payment plans. While many consumers do benefit from the 0% promotional period for high-cost medical credit cards, as discussed above, deferred interest products that charge high APRs of 27-30% for medical care are a highly risky financial product for tens of millions of patients. Consumers desperately need alternatives to the status quo that would enable them to receive medical services on a more affordable basis, that do not contain the ticking time bomb of massive retroactive interest charges. Health care is already expensive enough without adding steep, predatory financing charges, which are especially likely to hurt financially vulnerable patients, including people enrolled in Medicare and Medicaid, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and other patients with high health care needs.
- We endorse the other important NCLC recommendations to CFPB and HHS in *the Health Care Plastic* report, which include:
  - **“...Prohibiting medical credit cards from placing a charge on an account or issuing funds before a medical procedure is completed or the medical product is delivered (with limited exceptions).** Require medical credit card companies to instruct consumers that they have

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<sup>18</sup> Kuenhoff, April, and Wu, Chi Chi, *Health Care Plastic: The Risks of Medical Credit Cards*, National Consumer Law Center, April 2023, available at: [https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Report\\_Health-Care-Plastic.pdf](https://www.nclc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Report_Health-Care-Plastic.pdf)

- the right to cancel financing arrangements with no penalty before beginning the procedure.
- **...Reminding credit card companies that patients are entitled to withhold payment based on claims or defenses due to problematic practices by medical providers related to medical credit cards, and that they must conduct a reasonable investigation of such disputes.** Require companies to provide special outreach materials informing patients of this right. Require that companies cease working with medical providers that are engaging in abusive practices.
  - **...Adopting the requirements of the 2013 Consent Order against CareCredit as regulations,** such as requiring patients to apply directly with the credit card company for credit limits over \$1,000; requiring training of provider staff; and prohibiting providers from charging for services not yet rendered, with limited exceptions.
  - **...Clarifying that a credit card company violates the Credit CARD Act’s ability-to-pay requirements** if it does not have procedures in place to ensure that providers are not providing inflated income amounts or improperly filling out applications for patients with incorrect information.
  - **...Where consumer complaints reference false, deceptive, misleading, or unfair practices by medical providers, forwarding those complaints to relevant state or federal agencies with enforcement authority.** Require credit card companies to monitor providers for such practices and cease doing business with them if such practices are detected.
  - **...Collaborating with the FTC to bring enforcement actions against debt collectors** that are collecting or filing suit on unsubstantiated claims arising from medical financial products.
  - **...Including research about and discussion of medical credit cards in the CFPB’s consumer credit card market reports.**
  - **...Issuing reports about medical financial products,** outlining potential risks for consumers, including particular risks for older Americans and consumers with limited English proficiency.”<sup>19</sup>
  - We also endorse NCLC’s recommendations to the HHS, urging it to **issue “a joint statement with the CFPB condemning false, deceptive, misleading, and unfair practices by medical providers connecting patients to medical credit cards.** This statement should also clarify that, when medical providers receive federal funding, they have a duty to provide meaningful language access, and that duty extends to communications with patients

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

regarding medical credit cards.”

- **HHS should also direct the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services “to issue a statement informing providers that they should not offer medical credit cards when Medicaid will cover a service, and that they must inform patients regarding the option of a Medicaid-covered service when offering or upselling an alternative procedure that is not covered by Medicaid.”**
- Consumer Reports urges the Department of the Treasury and the HHS to work together to require all nonprofit hospitals to routinely and consistently advise patients of the availability of financial assistance programs, to ensure that all eligible consumers have access to this vital financial assistance. We are concerned that many consumers who could be eligible for this assistance are being directed to pay bills with high-cost credit cards and payment plans, without even being informed of its existence.

Thank you very much for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles W. Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

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**Appendix A. Medical Payment Product Experiences Collected by Consumer Reports (August 2023)**

First Name	State	Title	Body of story
Tina	NC	NO Bargain!!	<p>My chiropractor recommended Care Credit to help pay my bills.</p> <p>They offered no interest loan. What I didn't realize is they were taking out the minimum amount of money. When the no interest ended they charged me the FULL interest rate on the loan.</p>
EUGENE	TX	Watch payment schedule	<p>I borrowed \$20,000 at 0% interest for 24 months. If not paid in full by then the interest rate would be over 26%! The minimum payment that they recommended would not have paid it off in a timely manner and I assume that the exorbitant interest rate would have kicked in. I raised my minimum payment to ensure that it is paid off in 20 months. The devil is in the details so double check your math.</p>
Rachel	FL	Care credit card ( synchrony bank)	<p>I am in the middle of paying off my newest hearing aids. This is the first time I have done this ( but 5th pair of hearing aids). There is no interest if pay off in a year or the interest skyrockets. So the care credit encourages you to pay in small increments which will end in a high interest at year end. Be careful and pay what I consider three to four times as much as they request to finish the pay off in 12 months.</p>

Lola	MD	Care Credit experience	<p>My first introduction with Care Credit was actually for an emergency for a pet, followed by necessary surgery for the pet. When applying, I was told by the Card agent, I had 6 months from "date of purchase" to pay the balance of the "purchase", and after that interest would accrue. I signed up for the card, and used it the first time, about 12 days after applying. About 20 days later, I put another Vet "charge" on the card. I paid on it, paying the initial charge within the 6 month time frame, then paid the remaining balance, within a few weeks, believing that interest would not accrue since I had 6 months to pay off new charges. After the balance was paid in full, I received a bill for the interest, which was 29.9% on the total balance charged over a 6 month period (approximately \$1600) and interest attached to the interest not paid. I called about the balance. The first and second call, I was hung up on. The third call, I explained the situation, I started to receive resistance, being told the total balance was supposed to be paid within the 6 month time frame. I explained I had paid the balances within 6 months of the charges and the Better Business Bureau would be interested in what was happening, since I kept a picture of the agreement and took notes on conversations. She became a little more reasonable, retracting the interest. Despite the issue being resolved, I swore never to do business with a card company that misleads people, again. I destroyed the card and discouraged family and friends from using this company or any other, and that I would help defray their medical costs to avoid them being taken advantage of. Since that experience, I have had a dentist, dental surgeon, an Urgent Care facility and Pharmacy offer Care Credit, and all had a sign "Offering Care Credit" applications. I am blessed that I have medical insurance, thus not needing a Credit Card for medical or prescription expenses. I would advise any and all people to avoid this type of "Medical expense card" and go to the bank for a loan instead!</p>
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Allison	OR	Unclear terms and options every time I use my card	<p>My husband and I have been using Care Credit and Synchrony Car Care for years to help pay for services like dental, veterinary, and vehicle repairs that are too expensive outright for us. These cards have helped greatly in many ways to afford these services we otherwise may not have been able to get, however there has also been very unclear and confusing terms as well as no actual options when using them at most providers. For instance, just since the beginning of this year, we had to use the Synchrony Car Care card for air conditioning repair which was \$1,200 dollars. It was very difficult to find out if the retailer even took the Synchrony card and when they did and we used it there was no options presented at all for terms and we were not even told what the terms were before they charged the card-only after we received the receipt after paying did it say very briefly what the payment terms were which was no interest if paid in full in 6 months- there was nothing else regarding this agreement-nothing stating the interest that would be charged if it was not paid in 6 months, or any other possible fees, etc.-these terms only became available for us to view after the first statement was printed with this charge. Then we had to use both mine and my husband's Care Credit cards for a veterinary bill, totaling over \$1,300. At the clinic again there were little options presented as my husband's card was only allowed the paid in full 6 months option, again with nothing stating any of the full terms of this purchase; while my Care Credit Rewards Mastercard which had been forcibly made to 'upgrade' to from a regular Care Credit card, had other options available, such as deferred interest or different low fixed rate interest plans with varying months to pay off with fixed monthly payments-however I was very unsure what these all meant and though the employee at the clinic showed me the few different options, they had no actual information whatsoever beyond the name such as '24 month fixed low interest' and so I had to guess what would be best for me as I felt rushed to decide as other customers and vet techs, etc. were waiting on me. And so again, we only received knowledge of the exact terms of these purchases about a month later on the statements. And finally, a third incident regarding the Synchrony Car Care purchase-this card already had a normal balance with revolving debt and interest charged every month, and so I did not know how the payments I made every month would apply to the balances- and so how to make sure the 6 month no interest purchase could make sure to be paid off in the 6 months, e.g. if I paid \$100 a month would that go toward my 'no interest' purchase balance or the regular revolving balance? So I tried to over pay the first month hoping more would cover the no interest balance so it would be paid off in 6 months, but instead it was mostly applied to the regular balance. When I tried to find out how</p>
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<p>June</p>	<p>CA</p>	<p>There was no Dental discount. We used Discovery Card with high Interest rates. Financial Solution was supposed to eliminate this det. They charged over b\$2000</p>	<p>Discovery card charged high interest. Financial Solutions charged over \$2000 to illuminate this debt. It's been one year. This debt has not been eliminated. But they got their FEE.</p>

Terri	KY	CareCredit for dental	I have used CareCredit several times for dental procedures. However, I have always been diligent when making payments as to avoid interest charges. That's the key, because the finance charges can be ridiculous.
Piotr	VA	Thirty million(30,000,000) without health care, and this causes medical debt and shorter live spans.	There are thirty million (30,000,000) Americans, and that is a conservative estimate, without health care in the U.S., because these millions of folks are denied states Medicaid, or are not old enough to get Medicare, or they are not able to afford private health plans. To Whom It May Concern: Do not set idle. Do not ignore thirty million fellow Americans. However, do petition the White House, entire U.S. Senate, and entire House of Representatives to expand Public Option Health Insurance in Virginia and forty nine other states in 2023 or 2024; or lower Medicare age eligibility for all Americans to 60 years of age in 2023 or 2024!!!!!!! Lack of health care causes deep medical debt and shorter live spans for thirty million(30,000,000) Americans. Do print my letter in every major U.S. paper and electronic newspaper, and ask major T.V. networks to read my letter live.
Karen	VA	Curious about Sunbit	I have been using Sunbit, started out with automobile expenses and just recently used for purchasing eye glasses. Each time, I have been pleased with Sunbit and have been successful in paying accounts off. Will have two paid off in the next two months. Do not plan on using this for everything, since I do have a credit card that I am keeping current as well. So far, no problems and I intend to keep it that way!
Linda	IL	The Better to See You	I have used my Care Credit card for vision care. I have been diagnosed with Dry Macular Degeneration in both eyes. My Medicare pays some but not all and my prescription glasses are not included. Care Credit has helped me with the MacuHealth supplements which cost about \$75 for 90 day supply.

Robert	VA	No-interest payback period	<p>CareCredit has provided extended no-interest payback of medical expenses three times for me. They base the period, 6 months or 1 year, on the amount of the purchase. My Dentures were not fully covered by Medicare, so I had to cover \$1600 of the \$8,000. CareCredit offered 12 months at no interest. The dentist offered implants for \$33,000 but with only the same coverage of the first \$6400 by Medicare. I paid the \$1600 off in 10 months. CareCredit has also covered a hernia repair procedure (\$864 my share with \$2480 covered by Medicare (total bill \$3364) and vet bills of \$860. Both were 6 month interest-free payoff periods. I paid both off in 4 months. In addition, I have used CareCredit for an MRI and CT scan. I paid both off in 3 months out of the 6 month interest-free period. I typically use CareCredit for my co-pays of \$30 to keep the account active and pay it off monthly. So far, CareCredit has been a blessing to me.</p>
HEIDI	CT	Care Credit	<p>I have used this card for years. Mainly for Veterinary services but once for my dentist. I love it. I schedule my payments 6 months for the dog 18 for the dentist, so the payments are automatically withdrawn on the day I get paid. I've never had to pay a penny in interest. If you can manage your payments this card is awesome. When I first used the card I contacted CareCredit (synchrony bank) to set a payment date that would work when I got paid. The latest I get paid is the 14th, so my due date is always the 15th. They were wonderful to work with.</p>
DAVID	MN	CarCredit: Convenient for unexpected/uninsured veterinary expenses	<p>I have use my CareCredit account primarily for major/emergency veterinary care costs, and once or twice for vision care expenses - prior to retirement and a Blue Cross Blue Shield COST plan (Medicare supplement) that offers vision care coverage. Although the CareCredit interest rate is substantial, it's waived if paid off in a certain number of months - which varies by the charged amount (at least, with veterinary care).</p>

Dawn	CA	Credit when we needed it	<p>I began using Care Credit when I was in need of chiropractic care which my insurance did not cover. I was fortunate to be afforded a 24 month no interest credit line as long as my "loan" was paid off within the 24 months. Clear communication via my monthly statement has made it possible to budget this expense and I have been mindful to never exceed my no interest period otherwise the retroactive I Teresa would have been excessive.</p> <p>I have used the card also for our pets medical needs and have encountered no problems using it..</p> <p>A consumer just has to be mindful of the promotional details and plan accordingly.</p>
Jackie	IN	Great experience	<p>Have used CareCredit option for several years. We always pay off early or on time, never getting fees. It has been a godsend. The secret?? Pay extra, pay off early or exactly on time. That is our responsibility. It is clear and concise in its format.</p>
Mitchell	GA	Use as long as you pay it off on time	<p>I used Care Credit at my dentist's office about 5 times over two years. Interest rates are 26.99% if I don't pay it off on time. I got either 6 months or twelve months terms.</p>
Arthur	VA	CareCredit Works	<p>We've been using CareCredit for over 20 years, the first time to finance my wife's hearing aids (\$5k+). Since that first use, it's been used for veterinary expenses over \$200 and once for dental expenses. We always use promotional financing (6, 12, 18, or 24 months) and have never paid any interest.</p>
Wallis	TX	Dental work help	<p>Broke, split a filled tooth on a popcorn seed. To install new tooth, had to have operation to strengthen jaw at that point, and have the tooth stud installed. Used a medical credit card, which had no interest for 6 months. Paid off account in 4 months. No issues. Beloved I was not charged any fees or interest. Yet not really sure.</p>
Suzanne	FL	CareCredit	<p>I have been using CareCredit for years! I have Never paid interest because they always have a 0 APR for 18 months. I am very happy with them! Highly recommend!</p>
Samuel	IL	Care Credit Card	<p>I originally applied to this care card for dental care. The interest-free credit when paid on time and paid off by the end of the free-interest period (which varies) help me get the dental care I needed without worrying what my dental insurance will pay.</p>

Victoria	NM	Care Credit is great, but take care...	I've used the Care Credit no-interest plans numerous times. They've helped me pay for expensive veterinary surgery for my dog, and costly dental work for me. A real lifesaver. Like any credit contract though, you have to make sure you pay attention to the details. Their interest rates are quite high so you don't want to get caught not paying off the plan by it's expiration or you'll get slapped with very high interest costs. Their customer service team is pretty good and I like they'll allow you to allocate your payments in case you've used the card for something else at the same time you're paying off a no-interest plan. That means that you can call and say "I've just made a payment of \$200 on my account and I'd like \$50 to payoff the doctor copay I charged and the balance of \$150 towards my promotional plan." This will keep you from getting charged interest on the non-promo purchases. I think the only criticism I can make is that the fees they charge providers are quite high so it makes some practices unwilling to use them. So the bottom line for me is the Care Credit is great as long as you use it wisely.
Mary	NY	Great help	I used a medical credit card for veterinary expenses incurred in spaying my cat. I paid the balance of \$500 in 2 months. The card itself came interest free for the first 6 months. I still have the card but haven't needed to use it except for one other time, and I paid that off in one month.
Diane	MI	They seem okay	I've used Care Credit for a few years, about 10) now and while I have used it as a dogs only card, I could have used it for my glasses, the reason I didn't was because I had the cash amount. Without Care credit it would have been impossible for me to afford the surgeries for my dog.
Keith	MN	My experience with CareCredit.	I applied for an account with CareCredit in anticipation of a procedure which I ended up not having. I was approved, a card was sent to me with an expiration date some 3 years in the future. About a year after I applied, I had a balance with another provider, which I could have used the card for, but I discovered that the account had been closed, some 2 years before the expiration date. I called CareCredit & they told me the account had been closed because I hadn't used it. They told me not to worry, that I could reapply. I didn't want the ding on my credit score, so I declined.
Gary	CA	Using Care Credit	I obtained the card a few years ago. it's been a wonderful bonus and experience. am signed up for paperless billing; as most of my bills are paid. this assures payment on time. was surprised it can be used for other needs as well, not only medical issues. glad I have it.



Julie	CA	Good Medical/Dental Card Experience	At age 80 I needed a tooth implant. The Dentist recommended the Wells Fargo Card for an interest free loan for 24 months. I am into my ninth month and no fees or charges thus far. I make regular payments in order to pay off the card before the 24th month. The total amount financed was \$4,100. For me this has been very helpful.
Margaret	FL	Experience using medical credit care	Yes, I have used Care Credit to help cover copays, insurance premiums and pet care. While the rate is high, it has served me well because I tend to payoff balance within a couple of months. Always pay more than the minimum due. It has worked for me but I no longer need to use it
BILLY	TX	Medical Credit Card	We use our Medical Credit Card often as we rarely have the funds to pay all out of pocket expenses up front. Care Credit give us several months to pay those bills with 0 interest and that is helpful. I don't now what we would do without it.
JOSEPH	TX	Back to a Healthy Mouth	For 20 years I have had an issue with under-employment and lack of insurance. Going back to repair damage from lack of professional dental care recently has run up quite a bill. I was approved for a Care Credit CC with 0% Interest for a limited time. The work is not complete therefore the charges are not done. I'll know more about benefits or drawbacks in the near future.
Patty	FL	A Great Boon If Payments are Made by Due Date	I have used my Care Credit credit card several times over the past 15 years and am a very satisfied customer! It has taken the strain off of paying some of my larger medical, dental & veterinary bills by spreading the payments out over a 6-12 month period - INTEREST FREE. I am very grateful for the service, and recognize that I am also very fortunate to be able to make my payments by the due date.
Valerie	CA	CareCredit was pretty good	I've used my CareCredit card for many procedures over the years, for myself and my cat. The 6+ month interest free financing has been amazing. All of my providers were careful to tell me to do the math and pay attention to the payoff payment amounts. The minimum payment on the statement each month is NOT sufficient to pay off the total. And if not paid off on time, back interest will be charged.  That said, I have had all positive experiences, as I have paid everything off on schedule. It gets complicated with sequential charges.

ROSEMARIE	PA	Dental Fees	In December 2021, I used Care Credit to cover the balance due after insurance for a permanent bridge. The amount financed was approximately \$2,500 with a no interest offer if paid within 12 months. The dentist's office did provide thorough information on the process, including a brochure prior to my decision. I knew at the outset that I would be able to pay the balance down well within that time, so instead of transferring savings money, I used CareCredit. I paid it off within four months, so their interest rates and fees weren't an issue for me.
Joan	VA	My dog Ashley	I was thinking about suicide when a dog was given to me. I need to take care of dog & named her Ashley. I got Care Credit card for veterinarian, had take Ashley to her first appointment, found out she had hookworms needed medication. I have taken Ashley to more veterinarian appointment. This will cost more money, because I am on a fixed income, trying to pay Care Credit down each month.
Frances	OR	Care Credit is Great	I've used Care Credit at my vet's office on several occasions. CC gives you 6 months interest free! I've always been able to pay off my debt within 6 months so I haven't paid any interest.
Janis	MA	Medical expenses	Yes I have conveniently used Care Credit for part of expensive medical care with the goal of paying a monthly amount over one year in order to pay off the total interest free within that year.
Sherry	ME	Glasses	15 years ago, I used Synchrony care credit once to help pay for \$600 glasses. It was interest free if I paid it off within a year. I did that with no problem. I have not needed to use them again.
Gary	AZ	Care Credit	We, my wife and I, have both used the Care Credit Card for mostly eye glasses and cataract surgery. It was 0% interest for a year. We paid it off on time so as not to have pay any interest. For us it worked fairly well. But it would be easy for someone to make the mistake of not paying it off in the given period of time and then having to pay a very high price for the accrued interest.

Nikki	AL	Helpful but watch out	<p>I use Care Credit for veterinary expenses and it has been very helpful b/c of the interest free 'promotions'. But you have to watch out b/c if something goes on the card that is not on an interest free promotion, any payments you make apply to that interest-bearing charge first -- not the interest free promotion that may be coming due immediately. So you can end up in a real bind if you expect that \$450 payment to go toward the expiring promotion and it does not. When I make a payment online, there's no option to apply your payment to certain charges, so if you need to direct a payment to a certain promotion, you have to call them on the phone.</p> <p>I faced no deception when signing up for the card -- it was suggested by my veterinarian &amp; was much-needed for the pet's surgical procedure at that time. The vet's office told me that if I didn't pay it off before expiration of the promotion, that back interest would apply. So I was warned.</p> <p>Ultimately, however, it's a distressing state of affairs that we should have to use these types of cards as often as we do. They should be for 'major emergencies' - such was the case when I first started using the Care Credit card. But now routine veterinarian care is so costly that I have to use the Care Credit multiple times per year &amp; end up facing balances that leave me depressed. I can see this would be the case with medical or dental care for myself, too. But I have so far avoided using the Care Credit for personal medical / dental expenses. So far!</p>
Philip	CT	CareCredit worked for us	<p>We were offered 0% CareCredit financing for a necessary procedure that was outside of our insurance coverage. The process was simple and straightforward, the terms were good, and using the Synchrony web portal works. So long as we pay the full balance before the offer expires, we're good with it. However, going past the end date of the offer would be extremely costly.</p>
Diane	SC	Medical Credit Card for Dental work	<p>I needed two implants costing a total of a little over \$4000. The Periodontist offered six months interest free if I used the credit card he worked with. I did use the credit card and paid off the balance before any interest was accrued. The interest rate would have been over 20% if I had not paid off in the allotted time.</p>

Diane	OR	For me and my pets	<p>I've been using Care Credit since the early to mid 2000's. I can't remember exactly when I first started using it, but I had two dogs and couldn't always pay out of pocket for their vet visits, which usually occurred at the same time. I remember that even after they both passed, I was still paying for their services, but my credit was good and I was able to make manageable payments to pay the balance off. I always worried about having to pay back the loan with interest because it was so high, that I always made sure I knew how much time I had to pay it back and how much I would need to pay each month in order to pay it off without being penalized. If I couldn't afford the payments, I wouldn't use the credit card, but in all of the years that I've been using it, as well as other installment credit cards, I've never had to pay interest. So to have a service out there like this is really helpful, but I can understand how it's not a good choice for everyone, especially if the bill is really high and the payment is more than someone can afford in order to avoid the penalty interest. I was unable to use my Care Credit card when I had to go to the ER, so I used a regular credit card and in order to avoid high interest rates, I opted to agree to pay back the amount within a certain amount of time for a fixed amount each month until the debt is paid off. I'm still paying more than I agreed to pay so that I can pay it off sooner and avoid the extra fee for the allotted time that I agreed to pay it back.</p> <p>I have 5 Synchrony Bank Credit Cards and I have only one that has a balance on it currently, but as I've said, I've never had to pay interest on them because I paid the balance on all of them before the end of the term agreement, so I've been able to get medical, dental, pet care, furniture, car repairs, and more recently, tools or equipment from Harbor Freight. Since I know the risks and how to manage my finances, I've never had an issue using these kinds of credit cards, but I agree that they are very expensive if you don't adhere to the repayment guidelines in order to avoid the interest. I can't imagine how much more I would've had to pay all of these years if I had defaulted at all on any of my purchases.</p>
Angela	VA	Vet bills only	<p>I have used care credit for many years, as if I spend more than \$200 at the vet, I get free financing for 6 months. However, we have had some very high emergency bills, and if that bill isn't paid off in exactly 6 months, we pay almost 30% in interest fees which goes back to the date of purchase and accumulates. I have about \$2,000 on my card right now, and every time I pay a chunk off, something else happens to a pet.</p>

Christy	ME	Using CareOne Credit for Dental Bills	<p>I have used a CareOne credit card a couple of times for unplanned dental costs. I had a year to pay off the balance both times interest free. I made regular monthly payments and paid the balance off within the year, so I didn't pay any interest. If I hadn't paid it off, the interest rate was over 20 percent, retroactive to the date of the charge.</p>
Mary	WA	Use of CareCredit from Synchrony Bank has only benefitted us.	<p>I have used CareCredit in the past, before I had established any other credit, and this helped me to pay for needed dental care that I could not otherwise afford, while allowing me to pay overtime without fees for a defined period of time.</p> <p>I more recently co-signed for a CareCredit card for my adult son with disability to pay for his care needs that are not covered by his insurance. This helped us to get him needed services when they were needed, gave us time to pay, without accumulating fees, and is now helping to establish a credit history for my son.</p> <p>I actually have no complaints, but I am a consumer who pays attention to debt terms and pays responsibly in good time, which saves us debt fees and helps us get what is needed when needed. I have not used any other credit card that is solely for the purpose of paying for medical care.</p>

Chelsea	CA	<p>We play the high-interest game by paying the credit cards off ahead of time.</p>	<p>We have had to use medical credit cards many times, when we couldn't afford to pay for things like dental surgery. But it's a dangerous game in this country where there is no universal health care.</p> <p>The way we've gotten around the ballooning high interest rates is by creating a schedule: we divide the amount due into monthly payments, and we pad those payments to be sure we pay it off a month ahead of schedule, to make sure that we pay it off on time, avoiding the ultra-high interest rate that occurs at the end of the grace period. We have never paid a dime of interest and sometimes I wonder why they keep giving us these lines of credit.</p> <p>There's a part of me that does not want to use them, because I know the way they make money is by betting on the people they know will not be able to pay them off on time, and will pay the interest rates that skyrocket after the grace period.</p> <p>But we've had to use them, and it's just another sign that this country needs an overhaul of its healthcare system, of the insurance companies that increasingly influence our healthcare decisions, and of the companies that prey on people who can't afford health insurance, which I believe is a right, not a privilege.</p> <p>You all would probably prefer that I not go political here, but I do not believe that healthcare is a political issue, I believe it's a personal one, as we have had to postpone needed medical procedures. But this is why we always vote for candidates like Bernie Sanders, who incorporate healthcare into their platforms.</p>
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STEVEN	OH	No choice "choice"	<p>My optometrist recommended a procedure for dry eye offered through their office. The cost was \$895. Payment choices were: cash with no cash discount, regular credit card, or opening a CareCredit account and receiving 18 months with no interest if regular minimum monthly payments were made and the balance was paid in full at 18 months. The interest rate was 26.99% and if minimum payments weren't made or the balance wasn't paid in full at 18 months, interest was applied retroactively to the opening of the account. This promotion ONLY applied to the qualifying purchase. I paid off the balance in less than 18 months and the CareCredit card has resided in my desk drawer ever since the initial charge. Although CareCredit tries various tactics to "encourage" card holders to use their card, it is a non-starter. The last thing I wanted was another overpriced specialty credit card having a dead-on-arrival interest rate for purchases not associated with a zero interest payment period. The card expires in 2024. I will be curious to see if a new card is sent to me or the account is closed because of lack-of-use. I do wonder what kind of kick-back the practice received from CareCredit for each account opened.</p>
Carmen	CA	veterinary Clinic expenses	<p>Yes, I used to use a credit card for those type of expenses but you have to pay back the balance within six months usually or the interest rate charged on the remaining balance goes really high. It is good that it is an option for dental, veterinary and maybe even pharmacy expenses but they do make it difficult. The interest rate on things that are definitely necessary, whether for a pet or for a necessary dental procedure or procedures and even pharmacy related expenses needs to be capped and kept low for at least 18 months after the charge is made.</p>

Gail	MI	Teeth	<p>Hi, yes, I have used a medical credit card. It is one that allows a year or 6 no. to pay for it without interest. After that the interest rate is high. I have to use one every time I need to get some thing completed on my teeth that my insurance does not cover. Like dental implants. I can't have bridges they don't work in the back of your mouth when your tooth splits apart from the silver fillings. The tooth causes pain, and must be removed. You have to have an implant. those are very very expensive. So, I have to use my medical card. I pray that I can have it paid for by one year. I have to give up some things to get it paid for so I'm not charged interest. I have had to have four dental implants to date. I've used the card every single time, and then I also had to use the credit card for the crown that is not included with the implant. That's another thousand dollars. I'm on a fixed income I'm a 71 years old and I've retired schoolteacher.</p>
Jen	MI	Care Credit has been helpful but I am still in debt	<p>I originally got Care Credit to help with a large dental bill. I have had a revolving account with them for over 10 years, and I pay more than my minimums but with an interest rate at 29.99 percent, the balance takes a long time to come down. It has been really useful in that time, though, we've had some other larger dental bills come up that I have used it for since the original sign-up. (My limit got raised a few times to accommodate those). I have also used it to help with vision care, vet bills, and it came in very handy for when I didn't have dental insurance. It is really helpful, and they have great "no interest financing for ... months" depending on how much you spend at a time, but those just end up rolled into the original bill once that time period is up. It does give us spending power if you are worried about how you will pay for something, but you end up paying a lot more over time. When offices want payments at time of service, this can be the only option sometimes.</p>
Chris	TX	Dental woes	<p>My childhood dentist sold his practice and moved away. I tried other dentists, but was disappointed with payment arrangements. So I would start a procedure and then would not have the money to continue. So I quit going to the dentist. Now that I'm older I have a nest egg that I can use and have begun to use to correct the problems I'm dealing with now. It is costing so much money that I'm have to wait until I have used up the small allowed on my current insurance and continue with even more problem the next year. I could never afford to take my son to the dentist and he bemoans about it. Which makes me feel bad, but I could not afford that either.</p>



Marilyn	TX	Root Canal	<p>I had used all of my dental benefits for the year. I needed a root canal and a crown. So the office manager told me their was a program that could help me and how was my credit. I told her credit was bad. So I needed a down payment. My bank account was overdrawn. I called one of my Sister in laws to Zelle me the down payment. After that I had the choice of paying off the debt in one year, one and a half years or two years. Even though I am paying off the debt in installments that is still a lot of money when you look at.</p>
Edgar	NY	Pretty Straightforward	<p>I have used medical credit cards twice when I needed to get a dental implant. The dentist office offered a "Care Credit" credit card that had a one-year interest free option. After the year it would increase to an exorbitant rate, but in all honesty, I did read the fine print; so, I set up automatic payments to be withdrawn so that my debt was completely paid off in 11 months and I never paid a single penny in interest. I understand the interest would have been very high if I did not pay it off in total it was close to \$3,000.</p> <p>The finance company is not the problem. The real problem was the price of the procedure. My wife had a similar diagnosis, but she took a different route. She said she could fly to Bogota and do the procedure for a fraction of the cost. She got on a plane and paid \$800 for a round trip plane ticket, stayed at a 5-star hotel for \$700 and had the \$495 identical procedure from one of the top oral surgeons in the country. In total she spent \$1995 including flight and hotel while here in the USA I paid \$3,000 for just the procedure. The fact that the procedure itself costs six times as much in the USA for inferior work is the real problem. The US medical system is out of control, and the only thing that can fix it is a Universal Health Care System.</p>

Ruben	WA	FALSE SECURITY	<p>I've had my medical/dental/vision insurance coverage for over 50 years. And my medical coverage has been wonderful over the years, especially battling life medical emergencies. I've used my dental and vision coverage for regular cleaning and checkups and had to pay a small portion of the cost, as expected. But in my aging years, I've had major dental work done over the last couple of years and find that my dental coverage fails to cover for them as expected, as I had to put out thousands of dollars out of pocket. Fortunately, I have the funds to do this. But not all members are able to do this. It's when we have major dental work is when we expect insurance to help us. My vision coverage is also very poor in coverage. I use it every two years for checkups and new glasses. But I cover the majority of the cost of these services. Insurance coverage is decent while using them for routine services. But when it comes down to major work, they fail to cover much. This needs to change. Retired seniors mostly live off limited income and need insurance to help thru the major medical needs.</p>
David	MT	Care Credit Crime	<p>Some needed dental work recently done in July,2023 without any significant insurance coverage and no payment plan through my dentist other than the "Care Credit" credit card.</p> <p>This company touts no interest payments on procedures paid in full within an 18 month period but there is an underlying "card security" fee charged monthly based on outstanding balance.</p> <p>On a \$9300 balance and making more than the minimum payment in one billing cycle I was charged \$332 in card security fees and my balance was undiminished by any noticeable difference.</p> <p>To retire this bill without paying any interest (which is false) I would have to pay more than twice the minimum payment each month for the 18 month period while all along having paid their hidden junk fees to the tune of a couple thousand dollars.</p> <p>This not a Caring Company!!</p>
Amanda	NC	Dental care	<p>I needed a crown and my dentist office suggested credit card. I noticed that I had paid it down to around \$500 two different times, and before I knew it, it was back up to \$1000 again. This has been going on for three years now. It should have been paid off two years ago. It's like going to a pawnshop.</p>

Paula	FL	Insurance wouldn't pay for my root canal and crown	<p>I was under the impression that the dental insurance plan that I had through medicaid would pay for a root canal and crown, was told that it was only for people under 26 years of age-I am a senior citizen and needed the procedure. The dentist recommended by my insurance company said that I could get Care Credit to pay and that I would have 18 months interest free to pay the bill. I faithfully paid the bill monthly with more than the requested amount was down to around \$700.00 and then the next month the bill rose to \$1400.00 because the interest was then charged. I called them and said that I would gladly pay the interest on the remaining \$700.00 and they said I had to pay the interest for the entire \$2300.00 which was what the dentist charged even though I had paid them more than the minimum amount on time every month. I feel that I have been charged excessively-have continued to pay them more than the minimum every month and am finally down to \$700.00 again. I hope to get this paid off soon and I will never use this way to pay a bill again; I would rather be in pain and suffer rather than pay the exhorbitant interest charged to me. I may be old, but when you pay faithfully and pay at least \$100. per month on a bill, you would think that even though the 18 month window had passed, that you would not be charged for interest on the original balance that is in my opinion most unfair.</p>
Tamara	AZ	Care Credit Nightmare	<p>My mom took out a Care Credit card after she went through treatment for breast cancer. Even though her Medicare insurance paid most of the expenses, it did not cover dental or the expensive medication she had to take for several years after the initial lumpectomy. Side effects from the medication caused bone loss, especially in her jaw. On top of this she fell and knocked her front teeth out. This past year she's needed over \$12,000 in dental work. Care Credit increased her interest rate from 22% to 29% which increased the monthly payment to over \$500. When she contacted Care Credit about a way to lower the payments, she was told Care Credit does not offer a reduced monthly payment plan and there was nothing they could/would do. Now I'm helping to pay her monthly payment and the dental work continues. I honestly don't see a way out of this.</p>
James	NV	Hospital admittance co-pay	<p>Had to do a very high interest payday loan to be admitted to the hospital after spending all day in the ER. Had no other quick cash available to me.</p>
raymond	MO	really cant afford the card	<p>yes use i use a card [ carecredit ] and i can barley afford the card... i used it for a few dentist appointment that my insurance wouldnt cover..and i didnt have the money for the bill.....</p>

Marie	TX	Needing medical help	In 2014 I needed medical help not covered by my insurance company . I was given a credit line of \$3000. I used it all in 2015. The promotion delayed the interest and first payment in six months. I did not know the interest was 24.99%. I became ill in 2016 no longer working, receiving disability. I still owe \$400 as of 2023. I am just too sick to add up the interest since 2014. This is sad for consumers too be over charged for everything in the USA.
Mary	MI	Surprise!	I have used Care Credit in the past, so I wanted to transfer my dental bill \$2900 to it, because I was having problems paying it. In the past if I charged \$1,000 I think I had about 18 months to pay it off at 0% interest. Wham! I transferred the bill and found and they gave me 6 months at 0%. That's about \$500 a month. Thanks a lot. Then 29% interest. Also, I was late on the 1st payment and they charged a late fee of \$42.
Renee	IL	Screwed By Care Credit	I had used care credit to pay for vetinary costs and dentist bills....I lost my job and missed one payment, I received my unemployment benifits and the next month I made a double payment....no, every month they kept saying that i owed more and more....I called them and at that point they told me they were compounding simple interest on a daily basis even though I had a contract and paid interest on what I was led to believe was a normal line of credit....if you're late you pay a late fee and life goes on....no! They kept adding and adding to the point that they said that I owed \$400 dollars extra above my monthly payment...I tried talking to them over and over again....it was like talking to a brick wall. To make matters worse they all had heavy accents that made it difficult to understand them...and every call was the same...reading from a script with blinders on....I finally gave up...eventually it went to a lawyer's office and we spoke, I explained the problem, we agreed to a payment amount of \$34.70 a month till the original balance (balance only without all of the added charges) and in three (3) more months it will finally be paid off...I knew that I owed the money, didn't have a problem paying the money with a monthlyh interest fee...I just do not like being raked over the coals so ti speak...That is my story about Care Credit...Even if I was given the opportunity to use them again...I wouldn't!
Alden	ID	Care Credit for Miracle Ear hearing aids	Miracle Ear offered Care Credit at a supposed discount credit charge that turned out to be 21%. I now am paying more than I thought I would pay. My fault for not reading all of the papers till I got the bill from Care Credit.

JEFFREY	LA	Repossessed Implants	I went bankrupt and Care Credit attempted to take out my implants. Really helps with large dental bills.
Douglas	MN	Hearing Aid Credit Card	<p>I am and have been hearing impaired since childhood ( I am now over 70). Over the years beginning in my mid-thirties advancements in hearing loss diagnosis and hearing aid technology have enabled me to acquire my first hearing aid I have worn two hearing aids ever since. The difference is my quality of life, as you might imagine, is remarkable. Today without my hearing aids I would be functionally, as well as legally, deaf. However, the continuing advancements in hearing aid technology have come at a price - the cost of hearing aids can easily exceed two thousand dollars each. Not many people have what could amount to four thousand dollars available to them to purchase two aids at the time they need to replace their existing aids (every few years) as their hearing continues to decline or they are prescribed for the first time; hence medical credit cards are the only option if personal savings are inadequate (please note that hearing aids are not generally covered by medical insurance or through Medicare).</p> <p>Medical credit cards also have a cost beyond the purchase price and professional services of an audiologist. The purchase price through a medical credit card, often available only through the dispenser, in my experience, is at an interest rate of 24-29% annually. This is much too high when medically and practically necessary and places a financial burden on the wearer which could almost exceed the cost of the aid(s) themselves over time.</p> <p>Currently, I have a medical credit card balance of approximately thirty-five thousand dollars financed at zero percent for an eighteen-month period. This debit is at a special rate as long as I retire the debit in eighteen months otherwise the accumulated interest (\$1,250) is retroactive beginning with the original purchase date and will be added to my outstanding principal balance after 18 months. Of course, if I held the debt for the entire thirty-six-month term, I would pay \$2,520 interest plus the \$3,500 purchase price.</p> <p>The eighteen-month period changed during the examination, prescription, adjustments, and final finance phases from twenty-four months at zero interest to twelve and then eighteen; "a special deal". A deal I received only because I had paperwork reflecting the original twenty-four-month offer which then changed midway to twelve months. I actively lobbied and asserted on my own behalf to receive the longer/original term of eighteen months. How many people are willing and or able to aggressively pursue the change in terms at a time when they are in need</p>

			<p>of treatment or other medical services or a medical device? Actually, how many people decline or are unable to receive treatment because they can not self-finance, have treatment as a covered insurance benefit, or qualify for a medical credit card loan? In the case of hearing aids, do they just purchase an over-the-counter hearing amplifier in lieu of a bonified medically quality hearing aid?</p> <p>Further, even if they receive a medical credit card loan can they afford the high monthly principal and interest payments? Alternatively, do they qualify for a reduced-interest loan which still might require high monthly payments because of the shortened loan term?</p>
richard	AZ	Not quite as Promoted	<p>We took out a new card when the wife needed a bit of dental work with Synchrony Bank with quite attractive terms. It worked fine until we received a notice telling us that after a future date of just a month or two that we would be charged interest thereafter if we didn't have the entire balance paid off.</p>
Ricki	FL	Care Credit - it seemed like a lifeline but that it was a stranglehold	<p>My dog, a 10.5 year old Shih Tzu was diagnosed with anal cancer. Short version is that we used all of our cash and credit and then were able to get \$1800 in Care Credit. He died anyway and now we were \$6000 in the hole in cash and credit. I kept paying but it never really seemed to go down at all and finally paid it off in big payments. NEVER AGAIN! Use a regular credit card - or maybe just don't do it.</p>

Steven	CA	Usurious fees and interest.	Care Credit via Synchrony Bank charges breathtakingly unfair late fees and therefore very much makes the monthly payments close to nil! It wasn't something which was even close to obvious when I first applied and was approved for their card.
Earlease	NY	Care Credit (Loan Sharks)	My dentist connected me with Care Credit big mistake. They charged me high interest and when I late one payment they reported me to credit bureau. My balance is more than the amount that was borrowed.
Alva	UT	Medicare wouldn't cover the good lenses.	When my cataracts were getting worse, I looked around for options. My doctor came highly recommended. After my initial exam and estimate, I decided to pay out of pocket for the computer guided surgery and the best lenses I could afford, around \$8,000, and that medicare will not cover any of it. If I want what they will pay for, about \$4,000. I may not be pleased with the results. It took over a year to pay that \$8,000. American Express credit card off.
Caren	NY	"Care Not" Credit Tapped Out	Well obviously from title who this is about and the dentist was also at a fail for adding as much extraneous services that were totally unnecessary to load up the card resulting in no really needed teeth only repairs, cleaning and laser the limits could not be extended nor any additional credit due to the high interest rates
Diana	PA	"Care" Credit	about 3 years ago, my dentist said I needed a root canal and sent me to a specialist, because she's not set up to do root canals. It was going to cost more money than I could squeeze out of my limited monthly income (I am in my 70's, living on SS and a tiny pension), so they suggested I apply for a Care Credit card. I did, and was approved, and the root canal was completely, but I had to go back to my regular dentist for a crown, another big expense. By now, the card was maxed out at its \$1500 credit limit, so I closed it and am paying it off, slowly, at an exorbitant interest rate. With interest and late fees, I still owe nearly \$900, and am praying that I don't have any more dental emergencies. Every retired person I know has dental issues and it is a crime that Medicare doesn't cover dental insurance. I have one sister-in-law who took such wonderful care of her 3 children, and is now stuck away in a nursing home with virtually no teeth, refusing company she is so ashamed to be seen in her current state. My biggest fear is ending up like her.

SANDRA	TX	Dental Woes	<p>I needed some root canals done and used one of the medical credit cards available. Unfortunately, I found that halfway through the work that needed to be done, I needed to pay off the debt before I could continue with the work I needed.</p> <p>This resulted in me having to wait almost a year to get all the dental work completed. I was lucky in that I was able to pay it off, or pay it down enough to continue with treatments before complications set in, but it was very frustrating to be told by the dental office that they could no longer do the work that I needed.</p>
Len	OH	Insurance sucks	<p>Because as a retired person health insurance isn't worth a darn. They make you jump through all kinds of hoops and investigate hundreds if not thousands of companies to find what's best for you. Unfortunately each company only covers a few of what you need so if you have more issues you may need 3 or 4 company's which is absolutely unaffordable. I am just barely making ends meet on day to day living. When a problem such as my teeth crops up my insurance only covered \$1,000 (per year) of a almost \$3,000 bill. There dentist allowed a big discount but I still had to use my wife's care credit card. The problem is I need more work done but must wait until the 1st of the year. Another 3 to 5 thousand dollars.</p>
Meri	NV	Care Credit	<p>I got the Care Credit card account to help me get my dogs cancer surgery. While I made all of my payments on time, Synchrony bank still cancelled my account. They did not give me a reason. I logged on to my care credit account and it said I had a zero balance, but I know I never finished paying off the account. I am confused by their treatment of me. I have other accounts by Synchrony that are still open. If you find out why they cancelled my account, please let me know!</p>



james	FL	Care Credit cancelled account	<p>My partner had major teeth work to do. She got a grant from a billionaire. Plus, she got help from dental insurance, and then the rest had to come from care credit. She used her social security money, some of mine, and also we got help at the end of the % free period from my parents because I was caretaking them and needed to focus almost full time. So, I was not working. Then, she wanted to keep the amount there for dental needs. I used it 2 times for teeth work because the loss of work, and the legal actions on our home damaged my credit. I did try to get \$300 from Care Credit but they turned me down. Just a couple of weeks ago. Care Credit canceled my partner's account because she was not using it a lot. Plus, they saw my partner was getting a lot of 0% cards and using them to help save democracy. She supported a lot of democratic runnings up. She wants women to be free while all of us are free. I agree! She was able to open up another care credit a week ago for another dental issue. I am glad. The care credits and others should not have the right to cancel people for not using the credit right away plus they should not hit us with a high % when medical is the #1 need in our lives. Please help.</p>
E	MO	Aspen Dental Sham	<p>Had dental insurance, knew it would not cover everything needed, went to Aspen Dental for service. After consultation submitted insurance and paid copay. Returned for procedure and when finished set up payment plan through the office. After three months of on time payments they set me up with an installment plan through a third party with out my consent. I continued making my payments, on time, at the office where services were rendered. Two months later I received a notice from the third party that they were sending my account to collections. By this time my bill was paid in full. Upon investigation of my payments and insurance payment I discovered that I had over paid due to Aspen Dental resubmitting additional information to insurance company.</p>
KEVIN	NH	Paying medical expenses on an installment plan	<p>I'm a patient of Mass General Brigham in Boston, MA. Brigham has always offered an installment plan to pay off deductible or coinsurance amounts not covered by medical insurance. It's 0% and they ask you to pay off in 2 or 3 years. Having been a patient for the past 5 years, I've probably only paid off once or twice. I never get any grief about adding my latest visit balance to the plan. No discount is offered to payoff sooner. I can also includes balances from Dana Farber Cancer Institute on the same installment plan.</p>

RAYMOND	NC	Heart Attack in an ice storm	<p>6 years ago during a winter storm had a pain in my left elbow. This was about 2 hours after I had taken a blow to the back. Told my wife I needed to go to the emergency room to check it out. It was indeed a heart attack but they did not have a surgeon who could handle it so I was sent by a specialized ambulance to their main hospital. Had a stent inserted into my right coronary artery and went home 48 hours later. About 7 to 10 days later got a huge bill for all charges. Called the billing department and they told me that they had submitted the bills and not to pay anything until all insurance had replied to what they would cover. About 75% was covered by insurance and the rest was mine. Called the hospital billing department and was told that we could set up a plan and there would be no interest if payments were made as agreed to. Over the following 18 months I made my payments and was never charged a penny in interest.</p>
Steven	CA	Too many bills !	<p>I just set up a payment plan, CARE. I have been in the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, CHOMP often in 2022 and 2023. Triple bypass last year, gallbladder removal this past June and I have a kyphoplasty scheduled for next week. Last year I was given a full sponsorship after my bypass. All the co-pays were forgiven. This year, no sponsorship. CHOMP contracts with CARE so I can make payments without interest. I still have to pay my part but don't get penalized with huge interest rates.</p>
Keith	MN	MedCredit from Allina	<p>Don't expect a horror story here. I think MedCredit is a good option for people who have no other choices. Allina Medical, which serves Minnesota and surrounding states, offers this program for people who don't otherwise qualify for its charity program (which is pretty generous) and don't want to pay the high interest rates their normal credit cards charge. Maybe they don't qualify for regular credit cards. MedCredit doesn't run a credit check, so credit scores are not impacted. Terms are reasonable. Interest rates, when I used the plan a couple years ago, were just 8% annually, and payments were small. Frankly, I made payments that were much larger than required so I could get it over with. Caveat here: I used to work for Allina. I can't say I had a perfect relationship with my former employer, but this was a program they offered that I was proud of. I'm retired now.</p>

LEADA	TX	Read the fine print and do your own math	<p>Mann Eye Institute was eager to sign me up for Synchrony Bank's Care Credit to help pay for my cataract surgery by promising 18 months interest free and no fees. Fortunately, one of the first pieces of information Care Credit emailed me after I signed up displayed the 26% interest charge. That put me on notice to make sure I was done paying by the end of the 18 months. Of course the minimum payment they ask for is not adequate to accomplish that, I did my own math to determine my monthly payment. There was no fee to sign up, and paying attention to the details made it possible for it to truly be interest free.</p>
Susan	CA	Synchrony Card Credit	<p>I have used the Care Credit card for elective medical procedures. When I saw what was suggested was the minimum payment, I took the full dollar amount, divided it out by the full free loan time and came up with the payment amount I needed to make to avoid the excessive fees. My calculated amount was considerably higher than theirs! I made sure to pay the loan off 1 month prior to the cut off date of the free loan. I had no problems, no excessive fees and I have told others how to use the card to their advantage and still get the care they needed. I have not used this card in 10+ years, but would again if needed.</p>
Alan+and+Linda	PA	Chiro service	<p>My husband has refused to have knee replacements for years. Of course as he hit his mid-seventies he was limping badly and in some pain. When he started seeing a chiropractor for his neck, he was asked about his knees. Naturally the Dr. had some ideas on how to treat the knees without surgery and put together a plan. They showed how it could be paid for by using Care Credit, and if the debt was paid within a given amount of time, there would be no interest due. Well, the treatments lasted for months, there was absolutely no improvement, and we were stuck paying \$400 a month for over a year in order to avoid the interest. Care Credit was fine to work with, and though I had never used it prior to this, I have since used it at the vet's with no problem.</p>

WD	IL	Too much pressure to buy dental services with all payment upfront.	<p>My son needed braces and I went with him to a dentist in Alton. They recommended Invisalign which would have cost \$5900. They wanted me to pay the total amount upfront and CareCredit had a credit card I could get approved for. Due to previous experiences where I paid upfront and did not get the services paid for I said no. I told them I would pay after each visit, that way they did not have all the money upfront with no motive to keep me happy. The two ladies working for the dentist then said I could save \$500 by paying right then. I said no, and when the dentist came in he became upset and acted like a little kid. This told me then I needed to find another dentist and compare prices. This same dental office later performed a crown on one tooth that broke and I had to pay to have fixed. The cost was over \$2000 and the procedure should have been done right or the tooth removed in the first place. I believe the crown was chosen it provided more money to the dentist than the extraction would have. I will seek a second opinion now when I have doubts.</p>
Wendy	MA	Hearing Aid, My Mother with Dementia	<p>In 2016 my mother started complaining about ringing in her right ear. She went to the hospital and doctor's office many times since it was driving her crazy. It was right before we started getting involved in her care (long distance), she went to a hearing aid place. They sold her a hearing aid, convincing her that it would help and they gave her one of those, high interest credit cards with \$3,000.00 charged on it. My mother was <b>**very*</b> poor and based on her income and meager bank account, she <b>**never**</b> would have been approved for this kind of loan.</p> <p>Everyone in the small rural town knew my mother had signs of dementia. The wonderfully attentive bank manager at the time told my mother to bring all of the paperwork in when she got her first bill. This angel has read about this kind of fraud through AARP and submitted a fraud report.</p> <p>Of course my mother continued to complain about ringing in the ear. The cost of hearing aids is near criminal anyway and this payment method adds insult to injury. I'll always be grateful to that banker. It was hard enough managing her finances</p>
Elwood	IL	Why can't Retiree's have an FSA Card????	<p>I used an FSA card for years, the money is deducted from my paycheck and then you use it, NO TAXES!! Why can't the Government do that with Social Security Checks?</p>

Rebecca	VA	Overcharged reimbursement policy	<p>I had my second hand surgery on February 22nd of 2022 the hospital said that we would owe over \$2,500 after the insurance. We applied for a Care Credit Card that covered \$2,400 and they agreed to take two payments of \$83 and some change using my debit card on the 22nd of March and the 22nd of April.</p> <p>As it turns out we were way over paying for the procedure I had done. The Care Credit Card was owed back \$1,255 and on March 7th there was a deduction of \$196 out of my bank twice the amount agreed upon in 2 weeks early. I called the surgical center talk to the business department they recognized the mistake said give me two weeks I'll have a check in the mail. Two weeks later they took out another \$83 from my account I called again still not having received the first payment that I was due. They said everything was recognized, unsure why it didn't go through, but you are going to get a check for the full amount by April 7th. On April 1st I got a letter from them in the mail saying that the money was put toward my CareCredit card, the credit card that we got to cover deductibles and co-pays for me to have the procedure to start with.</p> <p>How is it legally or morally right to take money from someone and say, "oh I'm not going to give it back to you, I'm going to pay this business that helps us." It's my money [and] I decide what to do with it. They refunded CareCredit but now they're also giving CareCredit money that they owe me, money that was Cash directly taken from me. How is that fair, how is that legal?</p>
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