



spotlight on health care

Medical Paperwork Soon To Be A Thing Of The Past

(NAPSA)—Americans struggling to understand and manage their health care finances may be inspired by the story of Ohio's Elaine Christen.

Like many others, she's being asked to take on more responsibility to determine how to spend her health care dollars. Making these important health care decisions today, however, is done largely without the proper tools to help. It's like navigating a boat through uncharted waters without a map.

"When I want to pay my medical bills, I have to sift through a sea of papers in my desk drawer to find out how much I owe and when it is due," said Christen. "It's very confusing and stressful."

She's not alone. A recent survey on health care found that most people are concerned about their ability to manage health care bills for themselves and their families. The "sea of papers" that plagues Christen is a common source of this confusion and stress. In fact, a single trip to the doctor can generate three or more different pieces of mail for you, especially if lab work is done or if the patient is referred to a specialist. It typically starts with an explanation of benefits, which looks like a bill but it tells you it isn't. The actual bill doesn't arrive until days or weeks later.

Tracking Health Care Finances Made Easy

To help ease this confusion, the company that made personal finances simple with Quicken now offers a new online tool that

is free to members of some of America's top health plans. Paperwork is drastically reduced through automatic downloading of the information found on the explanation of benefits and medical bill statements into a secure location on your health plan Web site. Quicken Health Expense Tracker eliminates the medical coding and jargon by presenting the information in easy-to-understand language.

It also gives you an at-a-glance view of the math behind the calculations so you know what was billed, what was paid by insurance and what you owe.

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Once you fully understand your medical bill, you can quickly and easily pay your doctor electronically from within the product with the simple click of a button. By making it quick and easy for patients to pay their medical bills, doctors can receive the money owed to them without having to send multiple reminder statements.

"Instead of wading through that paperwork, all I have to do is log on to the quickenhealth.com site to see my balances and pay my bill. It's been a huge help to me and it's even helped me catch billing errors," said Christen.

For more information or to see if your carrier offers this free service, visit www.quickenhealth.com.