

# Families USA's Story Bank

## What Is the Story Bank?

The Families USA Story Bank is a collection of stories from people all across the country. People's stories are collected through an interview process and kept in a password-protected database to ensure the confidentiality of all of the participants. Details and contact information are shared with reporters, members of Congress, and advocates only after participants have given their consent.

## Why Does Families USA Collect Stories?

We collect personal health care stories to put a human face on today's health care issues. Too often, health care becomes an oversimplified matter of dollars and cents (or billions of dollars and cents), and the real people who are affected are forgotten. People resonate with personal stories and can see how individuals are affected by larger health care policies.

*Using personal health care stories to highlight why high-quality, affordable health care is important to the American public has proven to be an extremely effective communications strategy.*

## How Does the Story Bank Work?

Families USA collects stories in different ways. Participants can:

1. Call our Communications Department at 1-800-593-5041.
2. E-mail your story to [storybank@familiesusa.org](mailto:storybank@familiesusa.org).
3. Fax a story to Attn: Story bank at 202-347-2417.
4. Fill out the Tell Us Your Story Form online at [www.familiesusa.org](http://www.familiesusa.org) by clicking on the tab in the upper left-hand corner of our Web site.

We have found that the majority of stories are generated through our online story form and referrals from health care advocates on the ground.

Once stories are collected, participants are interviewed by Families USA's Communications staff. Participants are asked questions about their background and how they have been affected by the health care system.

On an almost daily basis, Families USA receives requests from reporters, members of Congress, advocates, and others who need real people to highlight often complex issues. If we find a story bank participant who matches a story request, we then ask that participant for consent to pass along his or her personal contact information.

Families USA works only with respected news establishments. And story bank participants are usually eager to share their stories to help make a difference. Nonetheless, participants always have the right to refuse any interview or any question during an interview. Families USA wants all participants to feel comfortable sharing their stories, because we understand that people are volunteering their stories and, at times, giving up their privacy to help educate the public about a particular issue.

If you have any questions about storybanking, or if you would like to share your health care story with us, contact Elizabeth Prescott, Story Bank Associate, [eprescott@familiesusa.org](mailto:eprescott@familiesusa.org) or call 202-626-0643.