

American Hospitals Screening in Arcata

Prompts Stories from Viewers



Film screenings can get people thinking about how health care works—or doesn't—in their communities. After the HCA/PNHP - Humboldt chapter sponsored a screening of [American Hospitals](#), theater-goers shared their experiences with chapter leader Patty Harvey.

Susan

My husband fell and broke his hip. I called 911 and they took him to (the hospital). Four days later they operated on him and replaced his hip—the ball that goes into the socket—but didn't replace the whole hip, a procedure that, I was told, would have taken some 20 minutes longer.

He has been in pain ever since and almost bedridden. The last couple of months he's been waiting for an appointment to go to St. Helena, the Coon Institute, for a total replacement, something that could've been done before.

Q: Would you be willing to participate in such a (single payer) system here in the U.S.?

A: Yes. It's so obvious what needs to be done, but a certain percentage of our political class just doesn't want to share. They want a dependent class to exploit and they just don't care.

Caroline

My deceased husband, an engineer who traveled a lot consulting, was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). He was 62, so too young for Medicare. It took up a huge amount of our equity. We kept taking money out of our house in Trinidad that we built ourselves.

And talk about co-pays! The first blood test they did cost \$14,000 and that was just the beginning. By the time he was 68, even with Medicare,

most of the equity in our house was gone, so I sold it and just got out by the skin of my teeth.

It was very hard, 60-80 hours per week (driving from Humboldt to San Francisco for hospital treatments). So now I live in a tract house in McKinleyville, my dream is gone, and I don't get to live in Trinidad anymore where most of my friends are.

Patti

I had the experience of being at (a hospital) two times recently. I had called my neighbor because I couldn't get out of my chair and felt confused and disoriented.

It took 10 hours to get a bed. I was in the ER with screaming people. A doctor came and introduced himself and then disappeared. I never saw him again. That was the first time.

The second time, I had a minor traffic accident and was sent to (the hospital) for observation. It took four days for me to be released. They said no one was there to discharge me.

Half the time there it was good, but so often it was cold and unfeeling. I was plugged into wires and cords stuck all over me; it was scary. I didn't know anyone who was there.

It's a mess. It's a lousy setup, it's so broken—and that film [*American Hospitals*] reminded me of it all.

I'm so angry at how I was treated. I never felt like anybody ever cared very much. You rarely see the same people twice; it was impersonal.

Now, I keep getting requests for donations to (the hospital). Not a chance. "You can't get money out of a rock!"

But they did have a patient advocate there who turned me on to MediCal. That took care of everything. Without that I can't imagine the bills I would've gotten!

Patty Harvey

HCA - Humboldt