

People Helping People: Seeking Healthcare and living Las Vegas...

Hello, my name is Ken and this is my story of living Las Vegas. I moved to Las Vegas little over 10 years ago from Hawaii where I was born. Hawaii was hitting a recession period in it's economy due to a fall in tourism and so I came to Vegas seeking out expansion of my computer business. Vegas showed promise with many direct flights opening up from International ports and an ever growing population coming from Hawaii, so it seemed just perfect for me.

After just the first year of trying to get started here, I found myself a very small and naïve fish in a vast and shark infested pond. I guess the first alert should have been all the commercials for lawyers I used to see on TV from the very first time I turned it on, but I just thought to myself it's just all a different advertising market here. Having failed my expansion goals and things not quite going as planned, I just hit one obstacle after another till I finally fell bringing the fall of my Honolulu business as well and contrary to what most people might think about someone moving to Vegas ending in financial ruins, my story was not about losing it to gambling here. In fact, gambling and the low cost of living here may just have just been the catalyst to extending my fall from happening sooner than it did.

A few years went by trying to regain some sort of stability in my life, hopping from one house to another, bartering my talents to keep me alive. Till I finally got a job or rather project from an International corporation basing themselves here in Vegas. It showed promise to finally get me out of the deep hole I was in and as I got somewhat on my feet, I even managed to participate in a few multi-cultural non profit organizations here just to give back to the community and be a part of a higher than selfish cause. The corporation I worked for flourished for a while grossing a financial gain over a half million within the first year, but unfortunately was owned by a less than integrity orientated man who mismanaged the finances and brought the company to it's eventual demise.

By this time, I had once again gained some recognition in the community and industry as a capable web developer and proceeded to manage getting both projects and bartering deals to help me survive. Then just 5 years ago I started to show signs of advanced diabetic syndrome which increased with symptoms and severity as time went on. A year later I was hospitalized for the first time in my life for two weeks because my ulcers ruptured, then 2 years after that my sciatica in my lower back returned and along with the severity of

my diabetic neuropathy left me apartment ridden for the past two years now.

I have always made my own way through life, working and taking care of myself, I no longer have family who I can depend on for support of any kind, so I must manage on my own. The gradual decay of my health has made this most challenging indeed, until I had to finally resort to requesting government assistance because I could slowly no longer create the income I need to survive, nor get any kind of treatment for my major medical health issues without being properly insured. Having been in and out of hospital's emergency care more than enough times over the past 5 years, I have learned by harsh experience that care and proper treatment is just not given to those who are uninsured or without large sums of money.

As my situation worsened both in health and finances, I began my trek into the government and various non-profit organizations "people helping people" network of agencies. To start I contacted many of the local politicians that had once pat me on my back or shook my hand for my volunteer community efforts these past many years. Out of 10 contacted, I received replies from just two. Congresswoman Shelley Berkley's office and the Governor's office. I was given a few leads where to start and so began the numerous phone calls, emails, and postal letters to various people and organizations to seek help for my growing health concerns.

Now three months into my journey and another visit to a hospital's emergency room for a bronchitis attack which I still have nightly also adding another \$5000 worth of bills to my already \$50,000 which I cannot afford to pay, I have almost completed the application process for SSI disability which I am told will end up declined after another 3 months or more of consideration. I have been turned down by over 50 non-profit or government organizations (including Christian and Catholic organizations) for help due to the fact that my current state of disability leaves me unable to leave my apartment without causing further health complications which I am ill equipped to deal with presently and because I have no insurance or Medicaid. I have also been turned down by over 70 various doctors, medical institutes, medical charities, and philanthropy organizations worldwide.

I am just one person who is seeking help to literally get back on my feet again. I am not cancer ridden, nor are my ailments untreatable. I am just an uninsured middle aged man of no particular fame or fortune who just may have made a few bad career choices leaving me

uninsured and unassistable by the government of which I used to pledge my allegiance to every morning in elementary school and worked and paid taxes to most of my life. I am just a normal person much like your father, brother, or neighbor. This much is absolutely true, my ailments are not so severe that they would likely kill me today or even tomorrow (they may, but not likely by ER standards). They will however, if left untreated, result in the same slow undignified death like any other terminal disease and take away any chance of me, just one person regaining his ability to become an income earning, self sufficient, and perhaps someday humanity contributing human being once again. I am just one person, in pain, in fear, in desperation, and with no where left to go, but to reach out and pray.

Who do I have to be, to get help?

Little Over a Year Later, " an update"

Here is a little update from an entire year of seeking help and caring for my health and employment from home. I still got a roof over my head, so that is something great, but that is where it ends. Stability of income still very shakey month to month. Well, that is to be expected given the current state of our country's economy. Health still deteriorating piece by piece and no insurance or potential to get some anytime soon. My most recent health drama is that I lost nearly half my foot due to massive infection and edema (water retention). Started off with just some blistering and then blew up to (well, a picture is worth a thousand words, so...) here we go: (please avert your eyes, should you be of weak stomach)



May 30th 2010

And this is getting better now after having initially started nearly 3 months ago. My leg up to my knee was in a similar state, but after daily cleanings with antibiotics and careful handling not to get anymore infected, It is what it is today. My story continues that some people from the catholic church, after having seen my foot in surprise along with my personal decision to care for this myself decided that I was mentally unsound and should be committed into care. Few days later, three Metro Police officers and a paramedic came to my apartment to assess my situation and mental state of mind. Unfortunately, they found me to be of very sound mind and doing the best I can to care for my wound given my circumstances and of course still not getting doctor's care due to lack of insurance and the ability to transport myself (still apartment ridden). I do say unfortunately because as the paramedic indicated, had I gone to emergency care, I would NOT be any better off nor would I have the antibiotics or other medication I need to help heal this any faster. I would indeed receive treatment while I was there, but once released I would be on my own again and not necessarily admitted because I have no insurance coverage. I have been visited by many health experts of many devices (holistic cures) but have found myself in an increased state of edema

because of some of the supplements I have tried. I used to have some minor swelling in my ankle for water retention due to being diabetic with neuropathy, and very immobile, but now my level of edema has risen to my lungs where I can no longer lay flat on the ground to sleep. When I do lay flat, I feel water feeding into my lungs and like the sensation of drowning I cannot breath. I prop my head up on several pillows (and you thought you woke up with a massive headache?) just to get a somewhat sound 2 hours sleep before the drowning sensation begins again. Staying vertical for a few hours after that will kind of reset the clock, then I can do another hour or two of sleep and thus revolves my daily life around trying to get enough sleep to function and function enough to get enough work done at home so I do not face eviction every month. Being sick by multiple ailments is one thing, but being sick and homeless is something I would not want to imagine. I have started and participated in numerous support groups online over the years and have found myself to be more of a rule rather than the exception. And surprisingly enough, I have found many cases where legitimately disabled Americans who worked hard and paid taxes most of their healthy lives, have been turned down constantly by government or other sources of support. So, who gets this help anyway? I know of at least 3 cases of people not receiving help till after they died from their infirmities. Puts a new twist on, "the checks in the mail" now doesn't that? In June I will be 47 years old, born and raised in Hawaii, over 11 years in Nevada and healthy for the better part of my entire life. But when the time came when I really needed to seek out assistance for daily survival, all I ever got was closed doors or half way made promises which never materialized. Where are really all these groups and government support which I always knew were in place for when I needed them or if I needed them? And will they help me in time not to be another statistic who inevitably falls through "those gaps" that you often hear about, but quickly forget. You have to have humor and a positive potential outlook of things to come or of that which already is because sadness & depression is just another pill to take of which you will never receive without proper insurance anyway. A more than 3 year journey of more than 700 organizations & individuals contacted in private, non-profit, media, and government. I spend my day smelling like a dead corps from the half rotting flesh falling off my foot daily of which I must keep constantly infection free and clean. I sleep in 1-2 hour increments for at least 2 to 3 shifts each day with the constant fear of drowning in the desert I live in, and must make ends meet to boot including the many extra drugs and supplements I take to keep my body going day to day (lets not forget insulin which they want to remove off of OTC status). So is this all there is? How can there be so many helpinghands reality

shows out there when there simply doesn't seem to be any reality in it? And how can we in all good conscious attach "care" to the end of the word "health" when there doesn't seem to be any "Care" in it? Just a thought... by ken~G

Summary of Ailments that I need help with:

1. Sciatica in the lower spine (2 lower disk damaged since age 23 when I fell off of a mezzanine at work and never got proper care for.
2. Bronchitis since childhood reoccurring time to time with ashma type attacks. Usually in evenings (currently regularly)
3. Diabetes basically under control with 70/30 insulin which I get from walmart OTC and metformin which I obtain from less desirable sources (no doctor, no prescription meds). Plus regulated diet (low carbs, low protein, and low sodium)
4. Neuropathy in both legs from the knees downwards (this has been a blessing with my right foot being exposed as it is)
5. Edema (water retension) in both legs up to my gluteous, stomach areas, and now in my lungs. Affects my breathing, energy levels, mobility, etc. trying somewhat unsuccessfully to address problem through herbal tea, caffaign, water pills, and diet therapy.
6. right foot top portion epidermis rotted and fell off leaving large exposed tissue area into fatty tissue, bones, and veins exposed. Blistering and some deeper tissue exposure on upper leg region below knee. Constant pussing, water and blood disbursal daily. Leave mostly open during the daylight hours and wrap it up before sleeping to prevent further damage and infection. Clean multiple times during the day.
7. left leg starting to blister much like how the right foot got before the large area skin displacement. Leaks out water throughout the day. I leave this side opne during day and night, just cleansing with alcohol and hydrogen peroxide daily to prevent infection.

Ken Ueki
P.O. Box 29265
Las Vegas, NV 89126
702-563-9676
Info@healthcare101.org