

Press release (Month, Day, Year) (your town) **CAMPAIGN TO REMOVE MEDICAL DEBT**

For immediate release

Church name and logo

A major survey suggests people in the United States owe at least \$195 billion in medical debt. Those struggling to pay their medical debt often suffer adverse health effects like high blood pressure, anxiety and poor nutrition. They can also face bankruptcy and homelessness. Many are less likely to seek medical care for preventative services or treatment. Removing the burden of medical debt changes people's lives and gives them renewed hope. Their credit rating improves. They are able to rent an apartment or apply for a loan. And, as they receive a second chance, their mental and physical health improve.

(Your church) of (your community) is participating in a fundraiser with a nonprofit organization that purchases medical debt and forgives it. In 2022, working with an organization called RIP Medical Debt, the 55 congregations in John Knox Presbytery raised \$14,245 and retired just over \$1.925 million dollars in medical debt for 2,594 families. Members of the (Your church) congregation were so impressed, they are raising money again and inviting others in the community to join them. (your church) is committed to helping families struggling under the weight of medical debt by providing hope for the future. They are excited to be able to raise money to buy medical debt for just pennies on the dollar and make it disappear. (Name of local church official) calls it, "Tremendous bang for the buck."

Statistics tell the story. 23 million people (nearly 1 in 10 adults) owe significant medical debt. Approximately 16 million people (6 percent of adults) in the U.S. owe more than \$1,000 in medical debt and 3 million people (1 percent of adults) owe medical debt of more than \$10,000. People ages 35-49 (11 percent) and 50-64 (12 percent) are more likely than other adults to report medical debt. They have greater health needs than younger people on average and aren't yet old enough to qualify for Medicare coverage, which may protect them from high costs. Larger shares of people in poor health (21 percent) and living with a disability (15 percent) report medical debt. People in these groups are more likely to need and receive care than people in better health and without disabilities. Among racial and ethnic groups, a larger share of Black adults (16 percent) report having medical debt compared to White (9 percent), Hispanic (9 percent), and Asian American (4 percent) adults.

The Presbytery's efforts are targeted to conclude Sept 21. Contributions from the (your city) community may be sent at any time to (your church name and mailing address). Donors are asked to mark their contribution "RIP Medical Debt". More information on the charity is at <https://ripmedicaldebt.org>. Their guarantee is that, for every \$1 donated, at least \$100 in medical debt will be forgiven.

Media contact:

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