Health insurance on demand? Some are betting on it

December 17 2018, by Tom Murphy

Nancy Buchholz holds her late husband Jeff's photo and billing notices from the hospital, showing that care costs had surpassed $300,000. Jeff died six weeks after being diagnosed with cancer this spring. Nancy got Bind coverage through her employer, Dove Healthcare and the only bill she had to pay for his hospital stay was the $1,900 copayment laid out in the new insurance plan. (AP Photo/Stacy Bengs)

A startup is trying to shake up health insurance by letting customers buy

some of their coverage only when they need it.

Bind Benefits has designed insurance that gives patients coverage for most medical needs and then has them buy additional protection for planned procedures like [knee surgery](link).

Bind also pushes patients to think more about where they get care and dumps confusing payments like deductibles in an attempt to give a better idea of what something actually costs.

This on-demand approach to [insurance](link) is one of the latest wrinkles in a yearslong push by companies and insurers to control costs and make patients smarter health care shoppers. Bind has started small, but its coverage has already drawn attention from the nation's largest insurer, UnitedHealthcare, and some sizeable employers.

Nancy Buchholz holds her husband Jeff's picture, who died six weeks after being

diagnosed with cancer this spring. Nancy got Bind coverage through her employer, Dove Healthcare and the only bill she had to pay for his hospital stay was the $1,900 copayment laid out in the new insurance plan. (AP Photo/Stacy Bengs)

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