

In death, one cancer patient helps to erase millions in medical debt

November 18 2023, by Tom Murphy



This family photo shows Casey McIntyre. Less than a week after her death from cancer on Sunday, Nov. 12, 2023, the New York woman has raised enough money to erase more than \$13 million in medical debt for others with a posthumous plea for help. Credit: Andrew Rose Gregory via AP

A New York City woman who died Sunday from cancer has raised

enough money to erase millions of dollars in medical debt with a posthumous plea for help.

Casey McIntyre told followers in a [social media message](#) posted by her husband that she had arranged to buy the [medical debt](#) of others as a way of celebrating her life.

McIntyre [wrote on X](#), formerly known as Twitter, that "if you're reading this I have passed away."

"I loved each and every one of you with my whole heart and I promise you, I knew how deeply I was loved," the 38-year-old wrote. The posts included a link to a fundraising campaign started through the nonprofit RIP Medical Debt.

McIntyre's husband, Andrew Rose Gregory, posted the messages on Tuesday, and the campaign quickly blew past its \$20,000 goal. It had raised about \$140,000 by Friday afternoon, or enough to buy around \$14 million in medical debt.

Gregory said his wife had good health insurance and received great care at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Even so, the couple saw some "terrifying" charges on paperwork for her care, he said.

"What resonated for me and Casey is, you know, there's good [cancer](#) treatment out there that people can't afford," he said. "Instead of dreaming of a cure for cancer, what if we could just help people who are being crushed by medical debt?"



This family photo shows Casey McIntyre with her husband, Andrew Rose Gregory. Less than a week after her death from cancer on Sunday, Nov. 12,

2023, the New York woman has raised enough money to erase more than \$13 million in medical debt for others with a posthumous plea for help. Credit: Emily Wood via AP

Patients in the U.S. healthcare system can quickly rack up big bills that push them into debt even if they have insurance. This is especially true for people who wind up hospitalized or need regular care or prescriptions for chronic health problems.

A [2022 analysis of government data](#) from the nonprofit KFF estimates that nearly 1 in 10 U.S. adults owe at least \$250 in medical debt. That total of roughly 23 million people includes 11 million who owe more than \$2,000.

RIP Medical Debt erases debt purchased from hospitals, other [health care providers](#) and the secondary debt market. It buys millions of dollars of debt in bundles for what it says is a fraction of the original value.

[The nonprofit](#) says every dollar donated buys about \$100 in debt, and it aims to help people with lower incomes. Spokesman Daniel Lempert said the organization has never had a campaign where someone plans for it to start after their death.

McIntyre, who was a book publisher, started treatment for [ovarian cancer](#) in 2019. She spent about three months in the hospital over the past year, her husband said.



This family photo shows Casey McIntyre and her daughter, Grace. Less than a week after her death from cancer on Sunday, Nov. 12, 2023, the New York

woman has raised enough money to erase more than \$13 million in medical debt for others with a posthumous plea for help. Credit: Andrew Rose Gregory via AP

The Brooklyn couple started planning for her memorial and the debt-buying campaign after she almost died in May. They were inspired by a video they saw of North Carolina churchgoers burning about \$3 million in medical debt.

McIntyre spent the last five months in home hospice care, giving her what Gregory calls a "bonus summer." She went on beach trips and spent time with their family, including the couple's 18-month-old daughter, Grace.

"Casey was very, very sick at the end of her life, and she couldn't finish everything she wanted to finish," Gregory said. "But I knew she wanted to do this memorial and [debt](#) jubilee. So I set that up and ... did it the way I thought she would have wanted."

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