

Inspired by John Oliver's precedent, 622,000 Michigan Residents Agree to Have Their Class Action Settlement Award Donated to Eradicate More Than \$38,000,000 of Medical Debt

This, the largest sum of medical debt forgiveness EVER, was facilitated through the nonprofit charity RIP Medical Debt

Troy, MI – Nov 17th, 2017 – A class action lawsuit in Michigan against a medical debt collection agency will result in the largest sum of medical debt being forgiven, ever, slated for finalization in March 2018. The decision to apply a large settlement as a donation to the nonprofit RIP Medical Debt was inspired by the *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* Show.

In [an episode](#) which has attracted almost 10 million YouTube viewers, Oliver purchased almost \$15M in medical debt in June of 2016 for only \$60,000 on the little-known debt market and donated it to RIP to not only pillory the collections industry, but to “out-Oprah” Oprah Winfrey by surpassing her \$7M car giveaway with a \$15M “debt giveaway.”

After Michigan resident Joseph Anger (the original plaintiff in the case) approached David Honigman of Mantese Honigman, P.C. and filed suit against one of the nation's largest medical debt collection firms for improper collection practices, as designated by the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), a Michigan court ruled that Accretive Health (now renamed as R1 RCM) must pay approximately \$450,000 to a class of more than 600,000 MI residents, as part of a \$1.3 million settlement.

The class' attorney, David Honigman, suggested they use the award to eliminate their own medical debt. By way of this choice, rather than send out a check for mere pennies to each member, the class leveraged the benefit of the settlement by utilizing a legal tool known as a cy pres award.

A cy pres award is a mechanism by which a class can use money awarded by the court to promote a specific, charitable interest. This marks the first time a cy pres award is being used to relieve medical debt. Had the class chosen to each receive a cash award, their individual payouts would have been just 62 cents apiece.

With the award Craig Antico, RIP's CEO and co-founder, has determined that his charity can now seek out, buy and then forgive as much as \$38,000,000 in past-due medical debt for the members of the class.

“We are overjoyed that the plaintiffs chose to take this settlement and help us eradicate the medical debt of these Michigan residents suffering from the burden of unpaid and unpayable medical bills,” said Craig Antico and Jerry Ashton, co-founders of RIP Medical Debt. “We hope this is the beginning of many others following suit, using their collective will to help fellow Americans who are struggling.”

An estimated 64 million adults in America struggle to pay their medical bills, resulting in families having to cut back on essentials like food, transportation and child-care. Over 60 percent of all personal bankruptcies cite medical bills as being the major reason for the filing.

David Honigman says, “Not only does this settlement deter future wrong doing by debt agencies, I hope it can serve as a powerful model for other class action suites. Cy pres awards are an exceptional tool for magnifying the benefit to each class member.”

To learn more about RIP Medical Debt, or to start a campaign to erase medical debt in your area, please visit: www.ripmedicaldebt.org

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