

Gov. Beshear to relieve \$250 million in medical debt for more than 130,000 Kentuckians

Governor signs executive order providing funding to Undue Medical Debt

Submitted by
the Governor's
Communications Office

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 15, 2026) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear signed an executive order establishing the Team Kentucky Medical Debt Relief Program, which will provide relief to more than 130,000 Kentuckians from \$250 million in medical debt. “Medical debt isn’t a choice – it’s what people are faced with after a serious accident, cancer diagnosis and more. Relieving this debt is the right thing to do to help Kentuckians who are overwhelmed by these extreme costs, which can cripple families for years, if not a lifetime,” said Gov. Beshear. “That’s especially true when medical debt results in bad credit, which can prevent families from securing the

American Dream of owning a home. Unpredictable challenges shouldn’t be a barrier for a better future, and today we’re taking steps to help make sure that isn’t the case.” Through his executive order, Gov. Beshear directed \$2.5 million to Undue Medical Debt, a national nonprofit that has erased more than \$49 billion in debt nationwide. The nonprofit acquires medical debt from participating hospitals and collection agencies, relieving debt for a fraction of the cost. For Kentucky, the breakdown equals \$100 erased for every \$1 spent. “We’re proud to partner with Gov. Beshear and Team Kentucky to lift the financial and emotional burden of medical debt for families across the commonwealth,” said Undue

Medical Debt Vice President of Government Initiatives Courtney Werpy Story. “No one chooses to get sick, get injured or face financial hardship simply because they needed healthcare. Thanks to this partnership, more than \$103 million in medical debt has already been erased for over 46,000 Kentuckians, with letters arriving in mailboxes starting next week – one less bill to carry and one less source of stress. We hope this relief encourages Kentuckians to re-engage with the healthcare system, and we’re grateful for Gov. Beshear’s leadership as we continue this work.” There is no application process for the Team Kentucky Medical Debt Relief Program, and debt relief cannot be requested. Eligible Kentuckians will receive an official medical debt

relief letter from Team Kentucky and Undue Medical Debt. The letter will notify recipients of what debts have been erased and from which creditors. No further action is required of Kentuckians who receive a letter; however, it is recommended that the letter is kept for proof of debt erasure. Beginning this week, the first 46,000 qualified Kentuckians will have up to \$100 million in medical debt erased. Official debt relief letters will go out in the mail beginning next week to notify individuals included that some or all of their medical debt has been erased. Joining the Governor for the announcement was Melissa Henry, a Kentuckian whose severe, chronic back pain led to multiple surgeries and appointments that loaded up thou-

sands of dollars in medical debt. Henry shared how having a portion of that debt erased helped her move forward and find hope. “No one chooses to get sick, and there is no shopping around to compare prices. Like thousands of other Kentuckians, I was opted into medical debt by illness and accident. Trying to focus on getting better, I had to choose between keeping the lights on and food in the fridge or trying to pay down the debt. It was a painful distraction keeping me from focusing on recovery. That debt followed me and affected my credit for years. It made it harder to buy a car, qualify for a mortgage; every loan I got had a higher interest rate. I delayed going back to the doctor even when I should have,” Henry said. “Undue Medical Debt erasing my debt gave me hope.

Hope that there are people and companies that care more about human lives than money. Hope that someday no one will have to make an impossible choice because they can’t afford medical care.” To qualify for the program, one must be a resident of Kentucky who owes at least 5% of their annual income for outstanding medical bills or earns at or below 400% of the federal poverty level, which is around \$100,000 for a family of three. **For additional information** Relieving medical debt provides a fresh start for hardworking families who have lost their financial stability through no fault of their own. For more information on the Team Kentucky Medical Debt Relief Program, visit MedicalDebtRelief.ky.gov.

Living Archaeology Weekend returns to Natural Bridge Park

Tom Latek
Kentucky Today

SLADE, Ky. (KT) – Natural Bridge State Resort Park will host Living Archaeology Weekend, a free event bringing together artisans, heritage specialists and the public to explore the area’s rich cultural traditions on Sept. 18-19. On Friday, Sept. 18, the event will host dozens of preregistered school groups only. On Saturday, Sept. 19, the event is open and free to all members of the public from 9 a.m. to

4 p.m. ET. The materials and skills presented at the event draw on over 100 years of archaeological investigation in the Red River Gorge area, as well as oral traditions and historical research. Guests will learn about the past through demonstrations like crafting pottery in regional styles and weaving cane baskets modeled after recovered fragments. Traditional flint knapping demonstrations focus on the spearpoint and arrowhead styles typical of the area. Bow-and-arrow and

spear-throwing demonstrations use tools modeled after those used by American Indian residents. The demonstrations also feature crops domesticated by Native peoples thousands of years ago. Other demonstrations focus on pump drilling, cattail weaving, cordage or string making and food grinding technologies. Experts will also demonstrate early Settler technologies like processing hemp, making rope, turning wool and hemp into yarn with spinning

wheels and drop spindles, and weaving on finger and back looms. Visitors can experience shelling and grinding corn using hand-operated equipment. The event also highlights the archaeological research and preservation work behind these traditions. Archaeologists discuss ongoing site-preservation efforts and share educational materials about Kentucky’s ancient and more recent archaeological resources, while other demonstrators explain the signifi-

cance of rock art petroglyphs and describe how the U.S. Forest Service helps protect the cultural and natural resources that make these technologies possible. Tribal demonstrators will share traditional and contemporary Native stories, material culture and speak the Native language. They will demonstrate traditional dancing and describe the regalia and sound-makers worn while dancing. On Saturday, musicians will perform traditional string band music associated

with the Southern Appalachian Mountain region. Now in its 38th year, Living Archaeology Weekend is organized by the Kentucky Organization of Professional Archaeologists, Kentucky Archaeological Survey, U.S. Forest Service-Daniel Boone National Forest, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kentucky Heritage Council and Kentucky State Parks. For more information, visit <https://www.livingarchaeologyweekend.org/>.

Looking back to Sept. 17, 2018

Written by Jonathan Wright

The following information was entered into the Sept. 17, 2018, edition of The Ledger Independent: — **Hundreds ride in cycling event** Hundreds of cyclists from around the commonwealth gathered to participate in the Limestone Cycling Tour in Maysville. The 10th annual Limestone Cycling

Tour was held Saturday with cyclists beginning and ending the tour in downtown Maysville. According to organizer and chair for the tour committee Paula Ruble, the tour is listed as one of the five of the Kentucky Century Cycling Challenge for 2018. “We have a committee of about six of us that have worked on this together, but I’ve been the lead which is between our committee and the Kentucky

Century Cycling Challenge committee, which we are a part of,” Ruble said. Although this is the second year since the event was renamed the Limestone Cycling Tour, Ruble said the goal of the event is still the same — a charity ride. “The money that we raise, after expenses, we donate the money to the Hayswood Foundation, to the Zach Ruble Scholarship, where Mason County High School students have the opportunity to be awarded a four-year, renewable scholarship of \$1,000,” she said. Her son, Zach Ruble

graduated from Mason County High School in 2008. He was an avid outdoorsman and an environmental studies student at University of Utah in Salt Lake City when he died in 2009. Cyclists have several options for routes they can take, Ruble said, each having various lengths. The routes range from a 24-mile route, a 40-mile route, a metric century route, which is 100 kilometers (around 62 miles) and a century route at a whopping 100 miles. All four of the routes began and ended near the Limestone Landing in downtown Maysville, traveling west on Kentucky 8 along the Ohio River. The Century route traveled through Minerva, Augusta, Germantown, Old Washington, May’s Lick and Orangeburg before returning to downtown Maysville after climbing nearly 6,100 feet during the route. “When they come back, there’s people trying to earn miles through the Kentucky Century Challenge,” Ruble said. “They’ll come back in, they’ll report the amount of miles that they did.” Several organizations and members of the community came together



Photo by Terry Prather
A large group waits to cross U.S. 62 near Clark’s Run Road, Saturday.

to set up the rest stops in the various locations in order to support the cyclists. Ruble said she is pleased to see the collective support from the community. “It’s a lot of different groups and organizations and community people that just want to throw in a couple, three hours for helping out,” she said. Of the cyclists who pre-registered for the ride, Ruble said almost 340 people checked in to take the tour. When compared to the near 100 riders from last year, Ruble said she was greatly pleased with the turn out. For many of the cyclists the appeal of riding long distances is about the togetherness and adventure from riding around places you’ve never been. Ed Broomall, who rode along the 40-mile route with his daughter, Corine Powell and brother Tom Broomall, is not from this area. The

family is from Ashland and the tri-state area. Ed Broomall said cycling is far more engaging than just simply exercising. “This gives us a reason to get together,” he said, “because we don’t all live in the same area, so then we plan a trip like this.” Anthony Shields, from Lexington, said Saturday was the first time he participated in the Limestone Cycling Tour, having just completed a metric century. He said he and his cycling group enjoyed the scenery of the area, citing that and the sense of camaraderie to also be a big draw into cycling for him. “You see and meet so many people on the rides from different places,” Shields said. “You’ll ride along, and it’s nice getting to see all of the different kinds of bikes. For me, that’s a big thing— looking and seeing all of the different styles of bikes and the colors, and just staying fit.”

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