

## “Natalie is a late bloomer”

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There was a teenage girl named Natalie living in Rural America, U.S.A. Her hair was blonde and her body was as small as a 5 year old. She lived in a one-bedroom apartment as the youngest of 10 siblings. Natalie got low grades in school and was bullied for her size. Every day when she came back home from school, she would sob for hours until her eyes got swollen. During the chaotic time of the Covid-19 pandemic, Natalie's wealthy classmates were talking about how they see the doctor through telemedicine in order to stay safe and healthy.<sup>1</sup> Natalie had to borrow the neighbor's computer because in her financial situation she could not afford a digital device. Classmates that did not have digital devices could not go to the doctor at all to prevent the risk of being infected with Covid-19.<sup>2</sup> During that time, the U.S. was going through a massive decline of in-person doctor's visits.<sup>3</sup>

Natalie's miserable life with mean classmates at school had become a normality, and her daily life seemed to be unchanged and dull. The one thing she had not realized was that she had been drinking a jug size amount of water everyday. One day Natalie's mother, Dianne, noticed Natalie drinking excessive amounts of water, so her mom decided to take her to the doctor's office in far away Urban City. One early morning, it took three hours for Natalie and Dianne to travel by walking and riding a crowded bus to the doctor's office.<sup>4</sup> After an hour, the wealthy looking doctor told Natalie and Dianne that she

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<sup>1</sup> Wealthy people have the luxury of having digital devices, so they can receive healthcare while social distancing. Digital devices are more difficult to obtain for people with lower socio-economic backgrounds. According to this article, 46% have used telemedicine, but the remaining 54% have not. The 46 % that used telemedicine had a higher median household income than patients that didn't use telemedicine. Armaun Rouhi, "Disparities in access to telemedical care during the pandemic," published on July 31, 2020, <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/disparities-access-telemmedical-care-during-pandemic>

<sup>2</sup> Remote Technology made a huge impact on the healthcare industry during the times of Covid-19. Remote Technology was a way to provide healthcare while maintaining hygiene. Remote technology is a way to slow down the spread of Covid-19. Karthikeyan Iyengar, "Learning opportunities from Covid-19 and future effects on health care system," published on June 20, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7305503/>

<sup>3</sup> The decline of in-person doctor's visits is greater than other types of healthcare visits. The Covid-19 pandemic urged many Americans to stay home, and avoid going to the doctor's office in-person as much as possible. Ateev Mehrotra, "The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Outpatient Visits: A Rebound Emerges," published on May 19, 2020, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2020/apr/impact-covid-19-outpatient-visits>

<sup>4</sup> Currently, people in Rural America have the inconvenience of driving long hours to go to the doctor's office. The lack of patients at rural hospitals tends to lead to pay cuts of healthcare providers. Austin Price, "The lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our healthcare delivery system," published on May 4, 2020, <https://news.berkeley.edu/2020/05/04/the-lasting-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-our-healthcare-delivery-system/>

has Type 2 diabetes. Dianne was so scared and worried because the family could not afford medication for ongoing diabetes treatment. Natalie's family did not have health insurance.<sup>5</sup> After many thoughts, Natalie and Dianne decided to receive metformin.

Metformin is a drug that's used for people with Type 2 Diabetes. It is a drug that controls the blood sugar level of Type 2 diabetes patients. Metformin is usually used with a combination of other medications, diet, and exercise.<sup>6</sup>

In order to receive metformin, Dianne created a GoFundMe page pleading for people's sympathy for a little sick girl. Dianne worked hard by asking her friends to donate for her little girl and calling the principal of Natalie's school, to ask the entire school community to consider giving donations for receiving metformin. Dianne did not sleep to work hard in order to meet the donation goal. In the beginning, there was no donation on the GoFundMe page for a while. Later on, Natalie gradually received donations to the GoFundMe page from friends, teachers, and classmates. Dianne luckily received enough donation funding in order to purchase metformin.

10 years later, Natalie became an activist politician that focuses on healthcare policy. Because Natalie experienced the Covid-19 pandemic, she realized that making healthcare more affordable is necessary even after the pandemic ended.<sup>7</sup> She developed and pushed policies of healthcare reform in order to provide more federal funding to hospitals to avoid the lack of hospital beds that almost ended her young life.<sup>8 9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> \*In America, we are living in the reality where many of our citizens aren't able to afford health insurance. 8 million Americans create Go-Fund me sites to receive donations, in order to pay for healthcare. Another 12 million Americans create funding pages to help friends pay for healthcare. David U. Himmelstein, "The U.S. Health Care System on the Eve of the Covid-19 Epidemic: A Summary of Recent Evidence on Its Impaired Performance," published on Jun 30, 2020, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7331107/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.webmd.com/drugs/2/drug-11285-7061/metformin-oral/metformin-oral/details>

<sup>7</sup>In U.S politics, healthcare is a topic that's being brought up frequently. Many politicians bring up health care accessibility within their campaigns. Healthcare workers have recalled that the temporary Covid-19 funds won't help the healthcare industry in the long-term. Lauren Weber, "Hollowed-Out Public Health System Faces More Cuts Amid Virus," published on July 1, 2020, <https://khn.org/news/us-public-health-system-underfunded-under-threat-faces-more-cuts-amid-covid-pandemic/>

<sup>8</sup> Healthcare reform is not only important during tragic events like the Covid-19, it's important to think about healthcare reform for the long run. Early actions play a critical role on how Covid-19 is being spread. Kim Krisberg, "US public health meets Covid-19 head-on: Pandemic squeezes long-underfunded public health system," published on May, 2020, <https://www.thenationshealth.org/content/50/3/1.1>

<sup>9</sup> National leadership is necessary in order to avoid a healthcare burnout. Funding in local and state departments is necessary for a robust healthcare system. Doctors and healthcare workers can't solve this healthcare issue by themselves. Charles B. Holmes, "How Lessons from Global Health Can Improve Health And The Response to Covid-19 In The US," published on August 10, 2020, <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20200806.949101/full/>

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