

World Heart Day: "We try to bridge the gap in medical treatment funding"

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By : Rahul Koul - September 29, 2018



With the advent of social media, crowdfunding is slowly becoming an easy option to seek funding help from donors to meet the costs of medical treatment in emergency cases. Milaap is one such initiative that began its journey 8 years ago, but over the past few years has emerged as the most preferred platform to fund medical needs.

This world heart day, Mr Anoj Viswanathan, President and Co-Founder, Milaap in an exclusive chat with the BioVoice shared few insights on the role played by crowdfunding in making healthcare both affordable and accessible to more people across the country. Read on:



What is the theme and focus of this year's World Heart Day?

According to the World Heart Federation, this year's theme revolves around 'My Heart, Your Heart', which aims at creating an awareness regarding what people can do to take care of their own hearts, and the hearts of their loved ones. The main call to action for this year's campaign is to make a promise. A promise as an individual to get more active, say no to smoking or eat more healthily, as a healthcare professional to save more lives, or as a policymaker to implement a noncommunicable disease (NCD) action plan.



What are your organization's activities with respect to WHD this year?

As a platform for primarily crowdfunding medical needs, the main aim during such days is to build and increase awareness regarding medical crowdfunding as a promising option to meet such pressing needs that must be addressed immediately.

Any treatment for such serious ailments can easily cost people a couple of lakhs, and the amount is difficult for most people to arrange at short notice. This is where crowdfunding platforms help people, making it easy to share their need with a large number of people, in a click and transparently raise the funds they need for life-saving treatment.



How can we tackle the heart diseases? Is the treatment better option or the prevention is the best?

For any disease or disorder, definitely prevention is better than cure, but once a person has been diagnosed with a certain condition, immediate treatment is the best and only way out.

An urgent need to save the life of a loved one or our own gives people very little time to explore many options, to make the necessary arrangements, or even to simply cope with the difficult situation. During such times, money is one of the biggest issues. Arranging the money required, within a very limited time can be quite a hassle. Since time immemorial, people have turned to friends and family to beat such crises, and online crowdfunding just makes the process both simple and transparent, addressing the issues of both those in need, and those willing to help them. It makes it really easy for even strangers to participate in providing help, by giving them a credible channel with verified cases to choose from.



How can the crowdfunding help in making the healthcare affordable? Any examples?

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For the beneficiary, this gives them a chance to continue treatment even when they have run out of their own savings and assets. An example is that of Mohana, a 20 year old from a very small village in Karnataka. Mohana was diagnosed with dilated cardio-myopathy with severe LV dysfunction when he had least expected it. A farmer's son, his whole life was shattered when he learned the diagnosis. His father had toiled on the field for ages and collected every penny to educate him. With an annual income of INR 30,000 the family had no way to arrange for the 7 Lakh required to treat Mohana. Fortunately, [the online fundraiser](#) started for him on Milaap managed to raise the funds with the help of about 80 people from across the world. Mohana underwent the surgery early last year and survived a heart problem he never imagined he could manage to get treatment for.

This is just one of the many stories. There are also incredible doctors like Dr Hamdullay in Mumbai and Dr Gopi Nallaiyan and his wife Dr Hema from Madurai who provide free and subsidized treatments to those with certain heart conditions. The truth is, these procedures are quite expensive because of the intricacies, and even equipment involved for the specialized care required. Such doctors have also turned to crowdfunding to create a corpus so that they can keep the good work going, and it makes us very glad to be a part of such initiatives. Although medical care is critical on such cases, the funds required often become an impediment to treatment. Through crowdfunding, we try to bridge that gap, making healthcare in such critical cases like heart diseases accessible to people by making it easier for them to receive and render financial aid.