



7 REASONS HEALTH CARE PHILANTHROPY COULD BE RATED "R" FOR MATURE AUDIENCES

- 1 Great grandparents get sicker!** Older adults are statistically more likely to engage with health care in meaningful ways. People who make financially meaningful gifts have usually had an experience with the organization or the area of interest. This may be a disease-related charitable gift, medical research support for treatment and cures or a gift that honors a physician, nurse or health care facility. While people of all ages feel and express gratitude and other emotions leading to health care giving, younger individuals often have competing priorities and different interests for their giving - even if they go through a health care crisis.
- 2 Millennials are as generous as they can be... but usually cannot be as generous as their parents.** Millennials are quite philanthropic relative to their financial capacity and interests—both of which are normally not focused on health care until later in life. An exception may exist for those who have experienced significant pediatric illness for themselves or their children. However, even in this situation, their parents and grandparents are more likely to be in a financial position to make a more impactful gift.
- 3 A small number of large gifts (~5%) make up the majority (~90% or more) of dollars given for health care.** Gifts from individual's or family's current income are critical for the sustainability of health care organizations and account for up to 95% of the gifts made. However, gifts from assets, while far fewer in number, are often the largest gift made in a person's lifetime and account for most of the dollars invested in health care. Gifts from assets are typically made only after mid-life expenses are

covered. Late in life, wealth accumulated over and above the necessities of financial security makes it possible to gratefully recognize health providers through giving—or protest the ignominy of disease with a gift to fight the illness or provide hope to those who follow.

4 Periods of wealth accumulation are followed by periods of wealth distribution. In the normal rhythm of financial life cycles, mid-life and younger individuals aim to grow and preserve assets to accommodate investment in business opportunities, college for children and/or grandchildren, weddings, family legacy and retirement savings. This extended period of sacrifice and saving is designed to lead to an accumulation of wealth that can be enjoyed and later transferred. Charitable planning for later life or end-of-life giving can provide a sense of engagement and accomplishment that can be achieved no other way.

5 Getting old is not for sissies. Aging, independent of any other variable, brings elevated risk for life-altering or life-threatening health issues. The older a person gets, the more likely his or her philanthropic interests will shift to include an expanded interest in health care. Cancer, heart disease, stroke, neurological conditions and other degenerative diseases are age-related in prevalence. Even our new malady, COVID-19, preferentially harms older adults. These concerns are even more all-consuming and frustrating for those who have heretofore been vigorous physically and successful financially. People with financial resources are accustomed to using their resources to alter the world to their liking. Without health nothing else matters very much.

6 70 is the new 50. Healthy aging is an emerging focus for the youthfulness-obsessed baby boomer generation. Boomers are beginning to realize what the Greatest Generation has already learned: wealth does not confer a pass to unending vitality. Health systems are investing in prevention and health maintenance—and those patients in the population that take advantage of these new and effective senior health programs frequently provide additional voluntary support to the programs in the form of philanthropy.

7 Generational philanthropy (parental guidance needed). Philanthropic matriarchs and patriarchs recognize that involving family members in their giving decisions pays off in more far-reaching ways than simply continuing to support their favorite charitable causes. Participating in the legacy-giving deliberations of a parent or grandparent can inspire a lifetime of pride, while visiting a permanent acknowledgement of the family member on a donor wall can give survivors a meaningful remembrance of being included in a momentous conversation.

So, go ahead and add some younger members to your foundation board. Engage children and their parents in your family-focused events. Host your fun run and golf tournament. Just do not lose sight of the cardinal rule when it comes to cultivating health care major gifts from individuals. Age does matter.

About the Author: Cindy Reynolds, CFRE, is a Principal Consultant with Accordant. You can reach her at Cindy@AccordantHealth.com.