

## How Health Systems Can Help Families During the Extended Tax Season in 200 Words

[Health Equity](#)

**Date Posted:**

Apr 27, 2021

Image



Countless factors affect patient health outside the direct care health care systems and clinicians provide. Poverty is a critical social determinant of health that can have significant effects on the [physical and mental health](#) of our patients and their families. To improve health care outcomes and quality of life, health care systems should help promote family financial stability.

[Medical Financial Partnerships](#) (MFPs) are collaborations between health care systems and financial service organizations, with the shared goal of improving health by improving financial well-being. We recently [described](#) Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's MFP's success in generating almost \$700,000 in tax refunds to our West Philadelphia community. This initiative provides an example of how a health care system can respond to a [community needs assessment](#) that identifies issues impacting local families—in this case, uncovering that citizens were forgoing care, food and other necessities due to financial strain.

COVID-19 has provided an opportunity for all providers—from independent practitioners to large systems—to join this wealth-building effort. Due to the pandemic, the IRS recently extended the federal tax season through May 17, 2021. [As highlighted](#) in discussions about the [Child Tax Credit expansion](#), tax credits are an evidence-based means of [improving both short- and long-term outcomes](#). Providers can play a role as we approach the tax deadline by encouraging and supporting patients and families to claim the money they are due through free national services like [getyourrefund.org](#). In doing so, we can empower families to combat the ravages of poverty.

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*Maria Rozo, MD oversees advertising and community partnership efforts for the CHOP Medical Financial Partnership.*

*This post is part of our “\_\_\_\_\_ in 200 Words” series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health*

*policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategic Operations & Communications Director [Lauren Walens](#).*

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