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## **Save on Health Costs**

Healthbeat by Deirdre Cox Baker

I'm trying to imagine a scenario in which I ask a doctor for a discount, but maybe it's not all that difficult to accomplish. According to a new book, some 61 percent of patients who do just that end up with a discount of some type.

"The Healthcare Survival Guide" is now available and has a Web site. It's priced at \$6.95.

I've seen some of the tips before, and included those in an Oct. 9 Quad-City Times article. The tips I used in the news article came from the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

Here are some of the money-saving tips stated in the book:

1. You can get COBRA for just one family member, such as one who is pregnant or who has a pre-existing condition.
2. Ask the doctor for a discount. Most (61 percent) will get one if they only ask.
3. Look on pharmaceutical Web sites for free trial offers for medications.
4. Check out a university dental clinic. There's one in Iowa City, run by the University of Iowa School of Dental Medicine.
5. When comparison-shopping for health insurance, look for delays when coverage starts. It's a red flag when reading the fine print.
6. Review the hospital bills closely. Charging for the wrong number of days is a common error.

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