

Jim Thomas Case

Jim Thomas is an 80 year old retired farmer who lives with his wife, Sylvia; granddaughter, Christy (age early 30's); and Christy's 5 year old son, Brandon. Jim and Sylvia's only son and his wife died in a house fire when Christy was 5 and they became her legal guardian. Christy, who is a Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN), works the evening shift at the local nursing home leaving Brandon with his great-grandparents. On her days off and weekends, she is usually with her boyfriend, again leaving Brandon with her grandparents.

Jim was a fairly successful farmer for many years, but when he couldn't afford the necessary equipment for running a full scale farm, his income dwindled. The couple took out a second mortgage but eventually ended up selling the land except for the small plot where their house sat. Their only income is Social Security.

Neither Jim nor Sylvia has a primary care physician. They have gone to the free clinic several times and have most of their healthcare screening (i.e., mammogram, prostate cancer screening, hearing and vision) done at the State Fair each year. Sylvia has severe osteoarthritis. Several months ago, her pain was so bad that she went to the Emergency Room. She was admitted for a right hip replacement.

Lately, Jim spends most of the day in bed because he doesn't feel like doing much. He often just watches television and skips meals. He no longer has much to do on the farm and he has lost interest in other activities he once enjoyed like cooking and fixing cars. Since his son's death, he has dealt on and off again with depression. After his son's death, Jim never really talked about the grief that he felt. Jim is reluctant to seek help for this because he is afraid that people in his community will find out that he has these feelings. Usually Brandon, Jim's great grandson, is his only motivation to get active.

Jim is having severe tooth pain but has no money to see a dentist. His granddaughter recommends that he visit the nurse practitioner who takes care of many of the patients in the nursing home. She encourages her grandfather telling him that his Medicare will cover the costs of the visit.