



Advisor wins award after wife's near-death experience

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by David Keelaghan | 14 Aug 2017



Financial advisors are tasked with providing the guidance people need to protect their future. Clients may not always be receptive to that guidance, especially if it involves paying for something they deem unnecessary. Insurance products not mandated by law can often be characterised as such. People, especially younger people, tend not to think of scenarios where they would require disability or critical illness insurance. Steven Bakouris, president of Bakouris Financial Group, has a different perspective, as those exact products provided immense support during one of the most testing periods of his life.

Soon after their marriage and the birth of their son, Bakouris' wife Dore started suffering from severe headaches. After going for a CT scan, she was diagnosed with a brain tumour, at age 27. Following her diagnosis, Dore's health began to

deteriorate rapidly and she was rushed into surgery, where it was discovered that her condition wasn't a tumour after all, but cavernous angioma -- a malformation of blood vessels that had started to bleed, putting pressure on her brain.

Dore almost died in surgery, and the ordeal meant she lost her right peripheral vision and had cognitive impairments. In a time of great emotional hardship for the Bakouris family, financial worries were the last thing they needed. This wasn't the case, as Dore had both critical illness and disability insurance. Her husband had sold those same products to clients beforehand, but the first client to ultimately need the coverage was his wife.

The experience saw Steven Bakouris recently named as one of the recipients of the [Real Life Stories Client Recognition Program](#). An annual award handed out by the US non-profit Life Happens, it honours four insurance agents and advisors each year for their exceptional commitment to assisting families through times of adversity due to a disability or an unexpected death.

Bakouris' case stands out as not only is he the first Canadian advisor recognized by the program, but the first where the client concerned was part of his own immediate



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family.

“It was early in my career when this all happened,” he explains. “When you first get into the business you learn about these products and why you need them. They really alleviate the financial stress. When something like this happens, you are going to have emotional stress and financial stress – you just have to work through the emotional stress, but by alleviating the financial stress you can focus on being with your family.”

In the case of his wife, the critical illness paid out a lump sum, while the disability insurance replaced part of her income as the family adapted from having two earners in the household to one. Since then, Bakouris has been able to use his personal experience in his professional life too. As an advisor, he can really say with confidence how valuable these products can be in times of turmoil.

“At the advisor level, I would say to have those tough conversations with clients,” he explains. “Some people have a tough time talking about these sort of things, but you want to be on the right side if something does happen. Be persistent with your clients; people don’t usually just wake up and think they need to buy insurance today. They need to be aware of what they have access to and how it can impact their lives. Telling my story helps with that.”

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