

Hello, my name is Marissa Flint, I am 19 years old, and I live in Torrington, CT.

In my senior year of high school, I developed Crohns Disease, a disease that is incurable and one that very little people know much about. It affects any part of the Gastro-intestinal tract, causes painful ulcers to the point that it can hurt to eat, and it also causes massive diarrhea along with blood. All through high school I dreamed of going away to a 4-year college, I was on the honor roll, and I knew I had a good chance of getting into a good nursing school.

When I was sick, I missed about 2 months of high school total, from hospitalizations, to trips back and forth to Hartford. As a result, my grades dropped and I knew I needed to get a full time job to help cover my high medical expenses. I also tried to go to college full-time. I had to cut back on the number of credits I was taking because it over stressed my body and I was getting sick again. This semester I had to put my dream on hold, so, I could catch up financially.

I knew I needed to get health insurance fast, as my father disowned me right before my 19th birthday, and cut me off his good health insurance policy. I then looked into where I was working, I knew they did not offer insurance as it was a small business.

I talked with my boss, which was back in July. They looked into Insurance in December but there was not enough interest for a group plan. I have tried looking for another job that offers insurance but I can't find any that will pay me what I am currently making.

I am now trying to find myself a health insurance policy that I can afford and that will cover all of my medical needs. Unfortunately, I haven't found a good one yet and it has been 7 months with out any Insurance.

Back in July I had bad stomach pains and dizziness, I had to rush out to Hartford to the ER. Luckily, I did not have to be admitted but it was still costly for me due to having no insurance. I also have had two doctor appointments and one colonoscopy that I have had to pay for out of pocket within the past 7 months.

Within the past 2 years I have had 5 colonoscopies, 2 endoscopies, and been on and off of prednisone 5 or more times. I've been on a new drug called Remicade that you need infused every 8 weeks by a nurse inside a hospital and I've also been on about 2 dozen different medications.

I am lucky right now that I am in a mild form of remission. I still have disease in my intestine, but it is causing me no problems. I say I'm lucky because I have no insurance and I cannot afford another doctors visit or any medications. I have also run out of treatments that they can put me on. Because of this, I get worried every time my stomach acts up that I will need major surgery.

Most people ask me "Why don't you apply for financial aid with the hospital?" That is a possibility except the fact that while I am financially independent, I live at home still, and financial aid goes by the household income. With my income, my step-dads income, and my mother's income, I will be over the amount allowed.

I am asking my state legislature, to please pass a law for Universal Healthcare that is affordable and reachable for everyone, that covers prescriptions, medical tests, doctor's visits, preventive care, as well as acute care.