

January 23, 2007

Connecticut Legislators

To Whom It May Concern:

I write this letter in support to pass legislation requiring CT health insurers to pay the cost of donors who join the NMDP. Coming from experience, it is very difficult for an individual and a family to, not only cope with the daily struggles of a loved one with chronic or acute health issues, such as cancer, but also with the medical tests, treatments and needs that are just as emotionally, physically and financially draining. My father was 43 years old when he was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). He lived for 10 years after this diagnosis, maintaining his health with chemotherapy, drug treatments and blood transfusions. It wasn't until his body stopped responding to chemo that a specialist recommended a bone marrow transplant. We were all shocked and worried about the outcome of this process. Would he survive the transplant? Would we financially handle the burdens? Could a bone marrow match be found? Luckily, we contacted the NMDP and they provided a wealth of knowledge, comfort and practical resources. We learned about ways to ease the financial and emotional burdens, and was assisted in organizing a bone marrow drive for my Dad. 50 people were brave enough to be tested and offered their marrow as a source of hope for our family. Without the assistance of RI health insurers covering the costs of the tests, many of the donors that joined, could not have been tested. The funds and grants that are available to cover such testing costs are depleted quickly and often very limited. It seems to be a logical answer to require state health insurers to cover donor testing as well. This legislation would expand the NMDP and allow for more matches to happen for people waiting. Unfortunately for our family, my father did not live long enough to learn if a marrow transplant was his solution to a healthier and longer life. We buried my father the day before Thanksgiving in 2006 and miss him dearly. We can't help but wonder if more people could be tested, through the insurers covering the costs, if more matches would be made and subsequently, more lives being saved; like my father. I urge you to please pass

this legislation in support of requiring CT health insurers to cover the costs of donor testing for the NMDP. It may lead to happier and healthier futures for many people in this world. And that's all we can ask for. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Renzoni
87 Elm Street
Johnston, RI 02919