

HB 5640

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Human Services Committee Hearing
Medicare Part "D"

Good afternoon Honorable members of the Human Services Committee:

My name is Harriett Werner and I am a registered voter from the town of East Hampton. I am here today to talk about Medicare Part "D" and how it affects the lives of people on a spend-down.

When people were on a spend-down previous to Medicare "D" it was easy for them to meet their spend down and go on straight Medicaid. Now because of Medicare prescription coverage, this is not so easy. People on a spend-down cannot claim their meds as part of the spend-down and therefore, do not meet the requirements.

Again, the people who are poor and can least afford a spend-down have one and the cost of a prescription can be up to \$16.50 per prescription. When are the state leaders going to learn not to balance the budget on the backs of people who are struggling to meet their basic needs; rent, food, heat and medication. Isn't it time to start giving these people a hand-up instead of a hand out.

I urge you, the legislators, to up the income limit for medicaid recipients on a spend-down. If this is not done, then people will choose what is more important to survive: Heat, rent, food or medications. Let me tell you what will happen. People will stop taking their meds, decompensate and end up in the hospital. This is what I did. I did not take my blood pressure meds because I could not afford the co-pays. You must also realize that people who take psychiatric medications also have other health issues. Some of these other health issues are caused by the side effects of the psych meds.

Health care is a right and not a privilege reserved for the wealthy. When people have good health, they give back to the community, either by volunteering or a paid position; which in turn taxes to the state and federal government are paid.

In closing, would you like to go without any of your meds? I think not. Please do not force people on spend-downs to go without theirs. This is the right and moral thing to do. Increase the income limit for people on spend-downs.

Thank you very much for your time and I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriett J. Werner
East Hampton, CT