

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Racheal Verdicchio-Morris and I live in Wethersfield. I write this letter in support of Bill Number 5023. An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage for Wound Care for Individuals with Epidermolysis Bullosa.

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I was born with one of the severest forms of EB called Recessive Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa; or RDEB. I have been fairly lucky in my 25 years with EB because I have received some of the best wound care coverage available. Currently Medicaid is covering the majority of my supplies. This has provided me with the opportunity to maintain my health, to move, thrive, and live throughout this world. I am incredibly fortunate. However, many individuals in Connecticut are not as fortunate, but this bill presents a variety of opportunities for all of us living with EB in this state.

Wound care is vital for survival for someone diagnosed with EB. Wound care is a daily routine that is a two-fold process because the wounds of EB are internal and external. My skin is sensitive to the slightest forms of friction. A simple hug can do a world of damage. Bandages act not only as an agent for healing wounds but also as the protective layer of skin I wasn't born with. It allows me to be independent, get out into the world, and share a hug. The skin within the body has its own set of challenges as well. I receive blisters inside the eyelids caused from the rapid movement during REM sleep. I also get blisters and wounds in the esophagus due to the simple daily task of eating food. Whatever nutrition I do take during the day goes straight to healing. Since my body is covered in at least 80% of wounds, I will never be able to do enough to generate healing with food alone. Therefore, I have a g-tube placed in my stomach and receive extra (or rather just enough) nutrition during the night to keep the healing process going. Regardless of the form of EB, the need for wound care remains the same. We need these bandages to live.

I am only 25 years old and that may seem young but when it comes to wound care coverage, absolutely nothing has changed since the moment I was born. Is it fair that I can have the opportunity to receive health but others with the same disease within our communities cannot? I ask you to please carefully consider Bill 5023. Thank you.

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