

Testimony of
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55 Center Street – Wethersfield, CT 06109
Connecticut General Assembly
Insurance and Real Estate Committee
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Good morning Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and the members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you today in support of **Senate Bill 290, An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage for Bone Marrow Testing.**

My name is Nicole Morrisette, and I am an 18 year old from Wethersfield. Three years ago all I knew about Leukemia was that it was a type of cancer. Unfortunately since then, Leukemia has made a big impact upon my life. Two people I am very close to have been diagnosed with this disease. The first was my high school English teacher Mrs. Gina Gallivan. She was 25 years old and in a matter of days she went from teaching English and coaching tennis to being diagnosed with this disease and having to move to Boston's Dana Farber Cancer Institute where she could receive the best treatment. The second person is Sue Lyons. She is my mom's best friend, my neighbor, and someone who is like a second mother to me. Sue was also transferred to Boston right after she was diagnosed.

Both Mrs. Gallivan and Sue needed bone marrow transplants to save their lives. Before that however they needed to go through the process of finding a donor match. Sue had a bone marrow drive that was held at the Wethersfield Country Club, and Mrs. Gallivan had drives at Wethersfield High School and two in Massachusetts. The difference between these drives is at the drives in Connecticut; the people who wanted to join the Bone Marrow Registry had to pay over \$60 dollars, and in Massachusetts the cost was covered by insurance. Over 17,000 people in Connecticut will be diagnosed with cancer this year. Many of these will be cancer of the blood like leukemia where a bone marrow transplant could save their lives. Cancer is something that is extremely emotionally stressful not only to the patient but to their family members and friends as well. When you're going through this kind of stress you don't want to be worrying about the financial aspect. Knowing Mrs. Gallivan and Sue has forced me to realize that life can change any minute and this could be me or you. The financial coverage for testing through insurance is something long over due to be addressed by this state.

I urge your favorable consideration and support of Senate Bill 290.

Your life and mine may depend upon it some day. Thank you.