

**Testimony before the Human Services Committee
Thursday, February 11, 2010
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Why it Matters to Take Medication

Years ago, in California, I got stiff on my medications several times and had to take a muscle relaxer. I didn't really think it was so necessary or vital to take medication but I took it for 40 years—since I've been 20--and now I am filled with a heart-felt conviction that it was the right thing to do.

There is plenty of room for growth when you're taking medication and I now am on a very small amount of Resipirdal, Tegretol, Lithium and one milligram of the muscle relaxer, Cogentin. Wellbutrin which is an anti-depressant, is not addictive and got me completely off cigarettes. Every time I remember myself as a smoker, and then all the years I took Wellbutrin thinking I'd have to take it for the rest of my life to be smoke free, and now completely off it and cigarettes and caffeinated coffee, Coca Cola and Pepsi, a surge of so much peace and joy and fulfillment and happiness rushes through me. I can say that at last I am not defeated by habits and ways of being that I can't accept for myself.

The Tegretol I take and the Resipirdal and the Lithium are vital to my survival and fulfillment. Just recently my psychiatrist urged me to take a blood test not because she didn't trust me but "so I would know she was not poisoning me."

And then again without thinking these medications were so important now and wouldn't it be nice to shake them off like a bad dream, I took them and took them nevertheless and now my whole life is changing for the better again. I think it's a shame that we have to pay co-pays for our meds. Life is hard and challenging enough for us. Having to pay co-pays could sometimes mean that we can't eat or take our life-saving meds. YES, I mean life saving. My ability to work at and accomplish things has been helped by my medications. I can take care of my apartment, work on my computer, get organized, be a help to myself and others as well as have a fulfilling social life. No matter what, I will never stop helping myself and others. It's too late—the meds have already helped me. And it is my profound hope that they will always be there to help me.

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