

SB 50
Kim Green

TESTIMONY OF KIM GREEN
INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
February 18, 2010

Re: Support of Raised Bill 50 - *AN ACT CONCERNING ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS*

Good morning, my name is Kim Green and I want to thank you on behalf of my self and other breast cancer fighters for your attention to this very important bill.

Originally I was not going to testify but last week something happened just as Anne's invitation to testify came to me via email. – Another glitch with my insurance company and my chemo.

I take two forms of oral chemotherapy daily – that's eleven vitamin sized pills. It's quite the routine because some have to be taken on an empty stomach, others with food, and don't combine and make sure you take your other medication, etc, etc. I take oral chemotherapy because last year the port in my chest that had been administering my intravenous chemo for the past eleven years, became infected. The infection spread to my heart and permanently damaged it. I underwent open heart surgery and spent 40 days in St. Francis. A central line is no longer an option. I am so thankful that I have oral chemotherapy to rely on; the problem is it is an absolute financial and logistical nightmare to receive. Every three weeks, when it is time to renew my prescriptions I receive the same reply, the cost of the drug exceeds what the insurance deems reasonable. There are no other drugs to take. I have heard this for 20 months now. After many phone calls to my oncologist and to my insurance company the issue gets resolve – but often several days have passed with no medication. The emotional impact is enormous. When you are a stage 4 cancer patient, taking your medicine on time is of utmost importance.

The cost to my family for oral chemotherapy is quadruple of what it was when I would go to the hospital for the day and pay my \$20 co pay. My meds cost over \$700 a month. Our insurance premium alone is one third of our family income. My husband will never retire nor will he change jobs because of the fear of losing the insurance that is priceless to us. The idea of a layoff is unimaginable. At a time that I should be healing and just enjoying the life that I have left, I am working in a small retail business to help cover medical costs. How I wish I could go back to the IV treatment that cost our family \$20 per visit even though it was an all day, painful, stressful day. There is no stop date for my chemo. I will take it until a cure is found.

I am married and have a 15 year old and 11 year old. When I think of what they are not receiving because of the cost of my meds – I often have tremendous guilt, especially now that college is on the horizon. Money that was worked hard for and out away is now gone. My husband keeps telling me that having a mother is more valuable than a college education, I so want to believe that....

The guilt battles with the true feelings of gratitude and thankfulness all of the time. These drugs are extending my life so that I can see my children off to college – I will never lose sight of how fortunate I am.

It just seem so logical that avoiding a hospital visit and being able to avoid the anxiety associated with a day of IV chemo is such a step in the right direction for cancer fighters. By passing this bill and taking away the financial and logistical battles enables us to focus on the fight at hand. The fight for our lives.

Thank you for your compassionate consideration.