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MICHAEL TUOHY

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Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Room 2800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 50, AN ACT CONCERNING ORAL CHEMOTHERAPY TREATMENTS

Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and members of the Committee:

Good Afternoon,

I'm Michael Tuohy, from Prospect, CT. I was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma in 2000 when I was 36 years old. I have been fortunate in that my insurance coverage has allowed me and my team of doctors to choose the best medical treatments available. I have been on an oral therapy for the past 3.5 years and am thrilled to tell you I am in remission and enjoying a good quality of life. However, I personally know of many patients in situations where they, along with their doctors, are faced not only with fighting cancer, but fighting insurance companies to reimburse their oral treatments. Patients and doctors should be basing treatment decisions upon what is medically the best option available to them, not what they can afford.

Over the last 10 years, I have seen many exciting novel therapies approved to help patients live longer, more productive and active lives.

New therapies have made a dramatic difference - advancing the treatment of multiple myeloma, extending lives and improving the quality of life for many patients. These new therapies are both oral and intravenous, yet many insurance policies require higher out-of-pocket expenditures for the oral drugs. This means many patients have had to forego getting the drug that's optimal for their treatment, or they've had to go into debt to meet the co-payments required.

In the myeloma support group that I run in Waterbury, I have listened to too many stories about a patient's fear and anxiety that they will not be able to afford the copay for the oral drug that their doctor has recommended.

One such story is of a woman who was newly diagnosed. Her doctor recommended an oral therapy as her best treatment option. She is in remission, but had to sell her house and is now living with her daughter so she can afford the co-pay for the oral therapy that is saving her life.

We are living in a new and exciting time where science and brilliant minds have advanced cancer therapies, but if patients are not able to afford them, then how far have we actually come? We need to update our laws so that there is insurance parity for oral and IV drugs. On behalf of all cancer patients, I implore you to support SB 50.

Thank you.

Michael Tuohy
Cancer Survivor
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