

Anne Marie Crews
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To the state legislators of Connecticut:

I am writing to testify in favor of the passage of the bill concerning medical treatment of injured employees under the workers' compensation system, an "Act Concerning Medical Treatment after Claimant Has Reached Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI)." In the course of my employment, I suffered an injury to my back and left shoulder on March 25, 2005, when I fell in my employer's parking lot. My back was reinjured on March 1, 2007, when I fell backwards when standing on my desk to remove a television set from a shelf, as directed by my employer. These injuries are covered under the Workers' Compensation Act.

In 2013 I was examined by the employer's physician, who found that I had reached maximum medical improvement, that is, that my back impairment was likely to be permanent. Thereafter, when I sought to make an appointment with my treating physician because of increased pain in my back, the employer refused to authorize the visit to my doctor, on the sole ground that my back had reached maximum improvement.

It took months of effort, including workers' compensation hearings, to get my return to my doctor and his continued treatment of my back authorized. The delay handicapped and frustrated me, and it caused me to suffer unnecessary pain.

Reaching maximum medical improvement doesn't mean that an injured employee doesn't need treatment; it just means that he or she will be permanently impaired physically. Someone with cancer, for example, may reach maximum improvement, yet still decline in health and require hospitalization and surgery. Similarly, a person's back condition may reach maximum improvement and afterwards get worse and worse, so that the person needs additional medical or surgical treatment.

It is time for the legislature to stop the insurance companies from denying needed medical treatment simply because someone has been found to be permanently crippled from an injury. This practice is a disgraceful abuse of the workers' compensation system by insurance companies. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,


Anne Marie Crews