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Committee Bill 418: An Act Concerning Off-Label Prescription Drugs:

The purpose of this bill is to provide health insurance coverage for off-label prescription drugs.

My name is Celeste Proulx and I am from Cromwell, CT. I was prescribed Lidoderm Patches by my primary care physician to use on my lower back for the constant pain I experience. Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield was covering this prescription for me. I was required to change my Medicare D provider to a "bench mark" plan since I was receiving benefits through the State QMB program.

Aetna has been my prescription provider. They do not allow coverage of the Lidoderm patches except for two conditions: diabetic neuropathy, and pain caused by Shingles. I contacted Aetna requesting an exception to this, which was denied. I also contacted the maker of the patches to request assistance with obtaining them for use for my back pain. Since I am technically receiving benefits through the State QMB program, a letter from DSS was requested specifically explaining that I could not obtain coverage for the Lidoderm patches through the state program. Those of us who have had to deal with programs through the DSS in Connecticut know that this is impossible to obtain. The understaffed department has never been consumer-friendly, and any attempt to navigate the system to acquire such a statement is never going to occur.

I am reluctant to report that I have been obtaining the Lidoderm patches from a friend who does not use the total amount prescribed her. I know this is technically 'against the law', but it has offered me access to this prescription being denied me by my Medicare D prescription coverage.

This bill for the **Off-Label Prescription Drug Coverage** directly impacts me as a person with constant back pain, unable to access the necessary medication prescribed by my doctor.

Thank you.