



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society  
Connecticut  
Chapter

FTR

## Insurance and Real Estate Committee Public Hearing March 3, 2015

### Testimony in support of SB 418, An Act Concerning Off-Label Prescription Drugs

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Hartley, Representative Zoni, Senator Kelly and Representative Sampson and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee,

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Connecticut Chapter is urging the Insurance and Real Estate Committee to pass SB 418, An Act Concerning Off-Label Prescription Drugs.

Multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are moving us closer to a world free of MS. Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, with at least two to three times more women than men being diagnosed with the disease.

There are over 6,000 people in Connecticut who are living with multiple sclerosis. Due to the significant variability in the MS population, people with MS and their treating clinicians require full access to a range of treatment options. Virtually all of the medications used to treat MS symptoms are prescribed off-label because they have never been approved specifically for use in MS. A doctor will prescribe a medication that he or she feels will be beneficial and safe, even if it is not specifically approved for that use.

Connecticut passed legislation, a few years ago, that covered "Off-label" prescriptions, however the legislation directed insurers to cover the medication if it was cited in one of three publications, which are since obsolete.

SB 418 seeks to remedy that situation by adding off-label uses for medication if there is evidence cited from studies in "peer reviewed medical literature," which is defined in the bill.

We urge the Insurance and Real Estate Committee to pass SB 418, An Act Concerning Off-Label Prescription Drugs.

Thank you.

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