

Abby Kasprowicz's Testimony

I was diagnosed at the age of 6 years old with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis. It's progressed to include uveitis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis. Over the past 37 years, I have had to change medication several times because they lose their effectiveness typically after 2 to 3 years. Every time I have to start a new medication it takes approximately six months or longer to see if the results are effective or not. If they're not I have to start over again with another medication and play the waiting game again. During that time period to see how effective the medication will be, damage continues in my joints.

I've also had to deal with medical insurance companies switching to other plans that I had no control over. Those new plans require prior authorization for the medications that I am on and it's a struggle to find medications that work when they don't approve the authorizations. As a result all of my forms of arthritis will experience flare ups when my medication regimen is disrupted. I have a team of eleven doctors who need to work together and communicate to keep the medications and treatment balanced to avoid my tendency to form blood clots. All of this costs me time and travel for appointments.

When an insurance company denies a medication that I'm currently on and wants the doctor to prescribe a medication that I have already tried and failed, it becomes so frustrating to experience flare ups that I know are causing damage to my joints. When I start a new medication and it takes at least 3 months to see if it's effective and when it's not effective my joints are being damaged more. It's the wrong medication that also causes flare ups and when I have flare ups it means going to the doctor more and being put on more medication that works to stop the flare ups. However, when the insurance company wants to put me on the wrong medication that both my doctor and I know that doesn't work for me it causes the insurance company to pay more money in the long run. Please pass this bill for the state of North Dakota so others don't have to suffer the way I have.