

Testimony for Healthcare Hearing

Need for Truly Universal Care

January 19, 2018

My name is Lynn Mazza. I have Crohn's disease, which is a disease of the GI tract that can cause, among other things, debilitating bouts of chronic diarrhea which then causes other side symptoms from the dehydration and malnourishment. Basically, imagine having a 24 hour "stomach bug" for months and months. Diagnosed in my early 20's; I have been dealing with this condition for almost 20 years now. Aside from this condition, I am actually a very healthy person- I rarely catch colds or have other issues. For years I did not have insurance and did not have a general practitioner. I paid my gastroenterologist out-of-pocket when I was in extreme crisis and simply went without health care if I could function even a little bit. During this time, I didn't have a general practitioner, and frankly, didn't need one. If I had an acute injury or, like one summer, swimmer's ear, I could not get an appointment at a regular family doctor for weeks and weeks, so I went to the local walk-in clinic and was seen and treated that same day.

Later, as I moved into employment that did provide medical coverage, I found that I only went to my general practitioner because the insurance company required it for referrals, not because I had a relationship with the general practitioner or because they were treating me for anything. My experience with a chronic debilitating disease is that all of my treatment comes from my specialists. So then I had the time off from work, travel and co-pays for my general practitioner appointment, so she can sign the papers to send me to the help I actually require, then another round of travel, lost work time and expense to go to the specialist.

When I heard that there is a move to get everyone coverage for general practitioners, I thought, "That's great- as far as it goes." But for people like me, with chronic and complicated conditions, this solution is far too limited. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that, at least in Bennington County, there are not enough general practitioners and family doctors to go around. The wait to see a doctor can be months, if they are accepting new patients at all. It will not serve to keep people healthy, only create another layer of expense and bureaucracy that keeps people from getting the care they really need.

It is time- we need to join the rest of the industrialized world and provide full, complete, truly universal healthcare for all people that allows them to see the most appropriate doctor for their needs. Make Act 48 a reality.

HAC 2018-93 1/23/18 Public hearing