

Testimony for Healthcare Hearing

Dentures

January 19, 2018

My name is Michael Ketcham. Years ago, I was hit by a drunk driver as I was walking home. I lost my left leg from the knee down and have been using a wheelchair ever since. Before the accident, I had had a couple of teeth removed, but after the accident, my health declined and I ended up having to get the rest of them removed. I tried to get both Medicare and Medicaid to cover dentures, and neither would. After fighting for that basic human need, I finally gave up. Eventually, with the help of VCIL, and a lot of work, I turned to local charity organizations and was able to piece together the funds to get a set of "economy" dentures. But it was a case of you get what you pay for and I'm still struggling to get them to fit comfortably.

In the meantime, over those years without teeth or dentures, I was not getting sufficient nutrition to heal or to stay healthy. I ended up with a severe decubitus ulcer that would not heal. My doctor said I needed more protein in my diet for proper healing, but without teeth or dentures, I could not eat many forms of protein. This caused what should have been a small wound to turn into a major health crisis requiring multiple surgeries. If I had been able to get dentures when I needed them, all this pain, suffering and expense could have been avoided. That's why Medicaid should have automatic coverage for dentures.

HAHC 2018-95 1/23/18 Public hearing