

**Testimony of Belinda deCastro**  
**In Favor of Senate Bill 103: The Patient's Access to Integrative Health Care**

Ten years ago, both my knees were diagnosed with cartilage degeneration. I couldn't dance or walk without pain or go up and down staircases. My knees were swollen and wouldn't heal. Needless to say it affected life in many aspects both work and social life. I was depressed not knowing if I would ever be able to walk without pain or resume regular exercise or dance which was really a big part of my social life. Resting my knees was not enough, it was not healing even if I abstained from dance, walking or exercise.

I consulted with two different orthopedists at that time, one at University of Maryland Medical Center, and both gave me steroid injections for a year. I was also told I would need arthroscopic surgery to start with and maybe later on I may be looking at some other surgery in the horizon.

My primary care physician told me that it was not a good idea to keep taking steroid injections and advised me to consult with a rheumatoid arthritis specialist who advised me to try Synovial fluid injections on the knee every 6 months or so.

At that point I was getting weary of injections on my knee and decided to go on a different route. I sought the advice of a holistic health pharmacist who suggested three supplements that worked synergistically to help heal my knees, and I also consulted with the holistic doctor whose practice was adjacent to his office.

I have since been taking the supplements, and I gradually found relief. I am able to dance now, exercise, use staircases and walk, and best of all my knees do not swell up anymore. I do have to make sure I do the above with care and reasonable moderation.

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