

Hi. My name is Laura and I am a parent of a PANDAS child. I am a Captain for Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service in Maryland. My husband is also a Captain. I tell you this because all our careers (23/27) we have been saving people's lives. But never in my life would I ever imagine the biggest challenge I would have would be to fight would be to save my own son's life.

So I brought these pictures to show you our journey. See my son was a normal baby. Happy, healthy and hit all his milestones. We really noticed the biggest difference when he was in second grade. He lost his laughter and smile. From 2016-2018, we had seen 2 different psychologists, 2 different psychiatrists and went to 2 different counselors. These appointments were once a week. The total cost for those two years was well over \$26,000. As compared to an average cost of IVIG at \$11,000.

Not only did our insurance pay for all of these appointments but we ended up on numerous psych medications that our insurance company also paid for. Imagine that cost for medications like Depakote for bipolar diagnosis, Propranolol for anxiety, Vyvanse, Concerta, Clonidine, and the list goes on and on. Nothing ever seemed to work. In fact, it was getting worse.

But you see all this changed on October 10, 2018, when our pediatrician diagnosed my son with PANDAS from a positive strep throat and clinical symptoms. I'll spare you the details but my son was extremely severe. Suicidal at age 9 (and PANDAS kids have committed suicide, look at Arkansas' bill), OCD, Tics, aggression, violence, anger, food restriction, school anxiety, the list goes on and on. We almost admitted him to an in-patient facility.

Over the course of the last year my son has had aggressive treatment.. After antibiotics, antivirals and steroids we had to move on to IVIG. Not every PANDAS child will need IVIG but we did because we were misdiagnosed and so severe for so many years.

I am here to tell you IVIG works. Kids need this medicine. We are a success story but would not have been if we didn't have IVIG. My son does not take any psych medications any longer nor does he go to counseling or see a psychologist or psychiatrist. He takes one medication right now and that is his antibiotic. That is already a cost saving measure for our insurance company with the proper diagnosis and aggressive treatment.

Please look at these pictures, look at my son who testified before you and see the difference. And just like my husband and I have spent countless years saving peoples lives we are begging you today to help save Children's lives that need aggressive treatments and can't afford them without insurance approval. These are innocent kids whose families are begging for insurance to pay for treatment. Please pass SB475. Save these children's lives.

Thank you.

Laura Murdock, mother of a PANDAS child