

My name is Kristin Hudson and my family resides in Worcester County. I am providing this testimony in support of HB 675 as it will directly impact many children like my daughter. Let me begin by providing a bit of background information. My daughter was diagnosed with moderate to severe Crohn's Disease when she was 12 years old. After months of being very sick and losing 30 pounds, we finally had a diagnosis and were ready to begin treatment. Her pediatric GI is located in Baltimore and immediately recommended she begin Remicade infusions every 8 weeks. I will never forget taking her to the University of Maryland Hospital in Baltimore for that first treatment. We were both nervous and scared. That was on a Friday morning, and by Sunday she was a different child. She wanted to actually eat and was not in pain. I was amazed at how quickly this drug was helping her. As time went on, and she received more infusions, not only did her physical health improve, but so did her mental health. She no longer was the anxiety-ridden child who was terrified to go to school or out in public because what if she needed to use the bathroom and one wasn't available. She continued on these infusions until the fall of 2021. We received a notification from our health insurance that Remicade was no longer a "preferred" drug. I had heard of this happening to other children and her doctor assured me that they could do a peer mediation with the insurance company and everything would be resolved. At this point my daughter was only a few days past her infusion date, so we were not worried. To make a long story short, our insurance company absolutely refused any type of approval for her Remicade, basically saying she needed to "fail" a variety of other medical options before they would allow her to go back to Remicade. Essentially, they wanted her to be sick to prove she actually needed a medicine that she was experiencing a great deal of success with. My husband had met Mr. Hartman at several agriculture-related events and decided that he would give him a call for advice on the situation. We had literally contacted everyone we knew to call-doctors, insurance reps, etc. Mr. Hartman was able to put us in touch with a variety of agencies, including the state Attorney General's office. After about six weeks we were able to resolve the situation and she was able to finally continue receiving her infusions. We were the lucky ones. So many other families have not had this outcome and their children are suffering because insurance companies are being allowed to deny/discontinue treatment protocols abruptly. My family is in complete support of HB 675 and we are hoping to see it passed into law.