

Good afternoon,

My name is Sarah Crimmins, I am a member of NAMI, and I am writing today to ask you to support SB388/HB340, the Prescription Drug Affordability Board- Authority for Upper Payment Limits.

In my senior year of college, I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and after years of treatment, would eventually be diagnosed as bipolar disorder with mixed mania. This basically means that you take mania- all the highs and tremendous energy and mood swings that come with the illness, mix it up with tremendous irritability, put it a blender and there-- you have my mood. Sometimes I am tremendously irritable and depressed and sometimes I have this massive energy but nowhere to direct it. I was always one to take medicine as prescribed but often it didn't work, or when I didn't have insurance, the cost kept me from getting the medication I needed.

Throughout the years of living with bipolar disorder, I had many obstacles that stood in the way of my wellness. I didn't have insurance at times, and I couldn't hold down a full-time job because of my illness. I was in and out of the hospital, and there was the constant search to find what medication would work. Then there was the cost of the medication. I had adverse reactions to medication—in some instances, my whole body would shake, my ankles would swell, I would gain weight, and other issues. Finding the right medication that was approved and at a reasonable price was often difficult.

When I started this journey, I was 22. Currently, I am 45 years old, and I am on disability and receive my insurance through Medicare. With extra help provided by Medicare, I can take the medication that works best for me (and has worked well for the last ten years or so). We have had to make some changes, but overall, the medication is keeping me stable. Recently, I lost my Medicaid because I was making too much money. On disability I work very part time to help keep me busy and stay active volunteering and working with NAMI. I don't make a living wage and I live at home with my parents.

It is so important to me that you pass this bill because if I were to lose the extra help provided by Medicare currently, I would be one of those people who would be affected by the cost of the drugs we are speaking of here. The drugs I take which now cost me \$4.50 for a three-month supply would likely cost me up to \$500 - \$1,000 for a three-month supply. The search to find a more affordable medication would be so detrimental to my health and well being because we have worked so carefully to find medications that keep me stable, and it is a trial-and-error process and there is no way of knowing what they may cost as well. I need these medications to keep me well balanced and functioning. At best, the medication keeps my mood stable and keeps me on an even keel and at most it keeps me from having suicidal ideation or worse. I need this medication for a good quality of life as do many others.

So, I ask you please, as you consider this bill, think of all those people who are counting on you to make sure they can afford their medication to live their lives as they do their best to live well with the obstacles that have been placed before them.

Thank you.

Sarah Crimmins 2/5/2024