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Diane Fantone
1209 Thomas Point Court
Annapolis, MD 21403

Fav/Support MD House Bill 0393

My Cold Capping Story By Diane Fantone

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Diane Fantone and I was diagnosed in December of 2022 with breast cancer in my right breast, after all the emotional testing I found out I had a non hormone based cancer called Triple Negative, which is an aggressive form of breast cancer. I was stage 2A after all the testing and learned I was grade 3, which is aggressive. I was totally beside myself and always prided myself on being a healthy woman; eating well and exercising regularly. I had my mind spinning with all the doctor appointments and trying to get in touch with myself and trying to figure out what was the right course of action. I needed a plan. After all the testing and meeting with all sorts of doctors and getting second opinions, I had a plan in place and I was to receive six months of chemotherapy (Maryland Oncology) followed my surgery (Luminis)(double mastectomy) then on to 39 rounds of proton (radiation) treatment at University of Maryland.

It was suggested to me since I was having chemo that I might want to try cold capping to help keep my hair as with chemo being especially hard and having to have the Red Devil treatment (Adriamycin) can be so harsh on my body.. The cost at the time for cold capping was \$1.500 which was not covered by insurance. It was a tough cost to shallow after all the other high medical bills. My family and I decided to give the cold capping a try, we figured it was worth the cost of trying to preserve my hair for as long as possible. I followed the Paxman Cold Capping Facebook page for pro tips and was so surprised to hear of all the positive stories that women from all over the world shared about being able to keep their hair. They gave me the confidence that I too might be lucky to keep my hair or part of it and feel somewhat normal and not look like I was sick while going through my treatment. We were on board.

The treatments throughout my whole process were hard and I can't say one step was easier than another. My first step was chemo and during chemo my friends/family would come and help me get the cold cap set up prior to treatment with all my head gear and ensure everything was tight fitting and that I was good to go for treatment. When the cold cap was fitted I looked like one of The Cone Heads from SNL, as much as I was scared I did get a laugh out of looking at myself in the mirror. I religiously followed all the instructions and made sure all was correct as it was so costly I wanted to give it my best shot. I wanted my hair and my dignity. Also when cold capping you have to stay longer for your treatments in order for it to be effective and work. For example I had to start 30 minutes prior treatment and 90 on the back side in order for the machine to cool properly. It is a process that I and so many were willing to take.

Cold capping worked for most of my treatments which I will say was a nice transition to have my hair and be able to post on the Paxman FB page about my achievements. I did have some

shredding and eventually at the end I did lose my hair, but I kept most of it about until the last month. . NOT all women do and there are many great success stories out there of women and how they have kept a large majority of their hair. . I will say my time being bald was short and sweet as my hair grew back fast and quick and although I had not had short hair in years this was a nice change to sport some new hair styles. With cold capping your hair tends to grow back faster and thicker than without. The effects of the granular loss and the quick regrowth was nice for my family especially my teenage daughter who took the diagnoses very hard.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis is one of the hardest cards anyone can get dealt, knowing your faith is in strength and courage one can only hope to make it as easy as possible. Hair is an important part of one's appearance, we as everyday people have the control to cut it, grow it, style it however we choose.. When cancer treatments tell you another story you have no choice but to stay the course and get better. Cold Capping for women (and men) is an important tool to help maintain and stimulate growth of hair during harsh treatments. I feel that it would be very beneficial for insurance companies to help with the cost of this essential element for cancer patients. My own personal story is one of great admiration for the women before me and the women after me who were brave enough to try and successfully use the cold capping system. I believe Insurance companies need to provide this benefit so others who are financially challenged have this amazing opportunity/resource to give them strength and feel normal while going through treatment.

To close I hope you will consider this bill to have the insurance companies pay for hair cooling systems to help ease the burden of cost and give cancer patients a sense of pride.