

Testimony of Caryn T. Jaffe RN, CLNC

I Support HB 259.

The Patient's Access to Integrative Healthcare Act of 2020

My name is Caryn Jaffe. I'm a Registered Nurse and an Integrative Medicine patient with Lyme disease, multiple tick-borne co-infections, and a life-threatening neurological illness called myasthenia gravis. My life was at risk because doctors were afraid to speak to medical necessity when 'numbers' on test results didn't add up even when my response to a medication proved I had the condition. Their fear hindered my healing. After years of struggle, I got lucky. My neurologist who found my case overwhelming referred me to a brilliant Integrative medicine physician. That referral literally saved and continues to save my life.

In the nursing profession, or perhaps any profession, people pick on those who know things they either don't know or are uncomfortable with. This behavior is rampant in the medical professional and I believe it's the basis of what integrative physicians face. Someone's anxiety over his or her lack of knowledge can prevent my doctor from practicing or limiting my healing. My hope would be, if I'm a mainstream medical patient, and my doc is aware of something that can help me with fewer side effects, lower cost, and better efficacy or if he or she knows of a different type of doctor who could manage my medical condition better, I should be allowed to choose that therapy or that doctor. This cannot happen when professionals point fingers for the wrong reasons.

The driver of restoring or maintaining a state of wellness is access to the medical system. If doctors are too afraid to use modalities they've studied and know to be effective because their colleagues do not or may not understand, patients like me suffer. A fearful doctor is not effective.

Patients should not need to rely on luck to survive. If patients like me choose to see an integrative physician who acts prudently as a diagnostician, health educator, wellness coach, and a healer, then we as a community must remove roadblocks and pave the way for this to happen.

Today, an Integrative medicine physician is saving my life. Tomorrow it may be yours. Please pass this bill.

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