

HB0283

I am a 55-year-old woman, with spinal stenosis and hip bursitis. I've also had two surgeries on my right foot for severe arthritis to fuse joints from an injury when I was 18, and the spinal stenosis comes from an injury/car accident when I was 20.

About 12 years ago I started taking tramadol. I was on it for 10 years and due to a situation causing an increase in my activity. I requested something stronger and went to hydrocodone. About 7-8 months ago I went to oxycodone.

I noticed as soon as I started taking the oxycodone that I began to have cravings. It did something to my brain that changed it. Instead of taking it as needed I begin to take it all the time and my found myself coming up short at the end of the month.

I realized that this was not going to be good about three months into the oxycodone. So I went to a friend and talked to her about it. I told her that I felt I was abusing it and I asked her to go with me to my doctor, because honestly I didn't feel that I could be honest with the doctor without somebody to be with me to hold me accountable.

We went to my doctor and I told her what was happening. I told her that I had weaned myself off in the last two weeks and I no longer wanted to take it. I didn't feel safe with it and had her add to the notes that patient could not trust herself to take as prescribed, so I wouldn't be able to change my mind. I told her that I wanted to purge my system of all narcotics. It took at least a month plus for the brain craving to go away. I didn't want to risk going back and requesting it again.

The only thing I didn't tell her due to fear of judgement is that I had used kratom to wean myself off.

I had heard about it and I thought it was just one of those things that kids took from the smoke shops and abused. But I decided to research it and I found my way to the American Kratom Association. I was able to find a reputable vendor, purchased my products, and through their social media I found somebody who also is active in the AKA who was willing to talk me through one on one through messenger as I went through the transition.

I find that it manages my pain and I no longer need narcotics at all, nor do I even take Advil. Also since I suffer from PTSD, I found out that the bonus of anxiety management was also included which I wasn't even initially seeking.

I to without the research just assumed the worst.

If they were to be banned in my state, I would be forced to go back on opioids. And that would be a tragedy. Because I also understand the devastation of opioids, having lost a 15 year old daughter in 2003 to an intentional overdose. Had she not been able to get a hold of some narcotics, perhaps it would not have been fatal. But she was, from friends, and able to mix it along with a variety of other substances and she passed away.

Thank you for your time in reading my testimony

Mary