

Appeal Letter to the State of Maryland

My name is Jonghyoun Angela Cheatum and I live in Hollywood, Maryland. My husband and I have five beautiful kids aged from 15-6 years old. I am here today to support HB 1284 because this will help our 15 year old daughter, Janelle, who requires continuous skilled nursing care in the home.

Janelle was diagnosed with RETT syndrome when she was 26 months old. She is on three seizure medications and four other strong medications. She requires 24hr oxygen and ventilation. Even with the oxygen she will have more than 12 apneas in 24 hours. Without the monitoring of her oxygen can be life or death for my daughter. She is non-ambulatory and is non-verbal but has a great spirit that you can tell she understands and is a very sweet loving girl.

Janelle loves be with her friends and around people. But without a nurse, she cannot go to school or in the community. Finding a continuous skilled nurse in Southern Maryland with Medicaid is a hard task. We have the benefit, but we cannot find people. Janelle missed almost half of the school year for so many years.

To fix the problem, here are my suggestions.

Remove the One year of Pediatric experience requirement for our nurses.

Recently, we found a great nurse who provides care to Janelle in the school and we believe she can be a great fit for Janelle in the home. However, we were told that she cannot work with my daughter because she doesn't have one year's experience in pediatric patients. Only Medicaid requires it. Not other insurances and clearly not the school requires it.

We were so disappointed we were not able to hire the school nurse because this was going to give me the opportunity to work for 7 hours a day for the first time in 17 years. After I was hired I have had to let my job know that I may not be able to commit to work because this nurse is not allowed to work for my daughter from home to school continuously.

On another occasion, I had some friends who went to nursing school and were willing to work for my daughter right after graduating in the past, but because of one year of clinical experience and pediatric requirement, our option is lost.

The care plan for my daughter handling multiple medical needs requires good skills. We have video and paper materials to educate our nurses when they come in. There is obvious difference in obtaining knowledge and handling the medical skills between LPN and RN. I hope we have more choices for RN because of understanding and handling medical needs better.

Compared to other insurances in Maryland, we would interview and train more nurses when we had Tricare insurance. Pay rate makes the difference immediately. As soon as we were under Model Waiver program, we could not find any nurse for almost a year. (We were out of Tricare in NOV. 2017 and found a nurse in September 2018).

Finding a good nurse in southern Maryland is like gold digging.

You cannot find the gold for a long time, and you have it, but you cannot have it because of the condition that does not make any sense. It takes a lot of time and effort to have someone on board, and one simple line threw that person out the window.

Another reason it is hard to find a nurse is the difference in wages between each insurance. If the pay rate is increased, it is possible to have more nurses to be willing to work in rural areas and the quality of nurses will be guaranteed.

Why can VA and other states allow new nurses to work with home health pediatric patients, but not in Maryland?

You are putting me in a place where I must sit and wait again until someone else finishes couple weeks of preparation to work on our case and that affects our family finances and quality of life. This cycle has been like a wheel for squirrel for me. Please remove this requirement for our nurses. Let them come in to work for us.

We are so tired and need help desperately! Thank you for listening!

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