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May 9, 2003

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor:

I have had an immune dysfunction disease, namely Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, for the past 16 years. I had a sudden onset at the age of 24 when I was working as a Legal Word Processor for a large Denver law firm while putting my husband through graduate school, in 1986. My immune system crashed and I was unable to walk within two weeks and went on disability. I used an electric cart for getting around inside and outside of the house. For 11 years I had no medicine available to help my muscles get stronger or to fight infection.

In 1997 I was blessed to be a recipient of an immune modulator, double stranded RNA medicine, Ampligen, which I have taken by I.V. twice a week for the past 5 years. I infuse at my doctor's office in Incline Village. Dr. Daniel Peterson is one of the world's experts on CFS and he has many publications as to how the drug works and why my body needs it.

The treatment is part of a Phase III Clinical Trial, cost-recovery program, the AMP-511 with the FDA. The medicine costs each patient about \$30,000 per year; which is \$15,000 for the drug, and \$15,000 for infusion and nursing costs. So far my insurance has not paid for the treatment. There is no other available treatment.

Now I will tell you how much it has helped me. My clinical laboratory tests have improved to normal, it makes my immune system strong, and gives me the ability to make ATP in my muscles so I can walk, ride my bike, ride horses, and care for my three children. I have tried unsuccessfully to stop taking the medicine three times, but each time I crash again and lose natural killer cells, t-cells, and the ability to fight infection. And each time I lose the ability to walk. When my body is without the medication, I am a sitting duck for cancer, as natural killer cells are the one thing an immune system needs to fight cancer growth.

I need this medicine, but I am having trouble paying for it. At such high costs, it is almost unavailable. And I do have medical insurance.

I plead for you to approve AB502 so that my insurance can assist me in getting this medicine my body so desperately needs in order to remain healthy. If I can never get off the drug, I do need assurance that I can one day get off disability.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita K. Patton
Reno, Nevada

Anita's Progress Based on Activity

