
Wanda Maclam

1901 Ridgewood Ave.
Salem, Ohio 44460
(330)-546-6373
wickedwanda@yahoo.com

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Chairman P. Scott Lipps
House Health Committee
77 S. High St., 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Lipps, House Speaker Cupps, and Ranking members of the Ohio Health Committee,

I am a 78-year-old retired resident living in Salem, Ohio. I am also the grandparent of an amazing young girl. Unfortunately, my granddaughter has had to battle the autoimmune condition PANDAS for almost 4 years now.

Four years does not seem like a lot of time to many, but I can tell you that this illness has flipped an entire family upside down in less than this four years. When we speak of chronic illness, we often think of Asthma, Cancer, Severe Allergies, Heart Disease, all of which have fathomable and affordable answers from the medical community.

When my granddaughter was ordered IVIG treatment to help with the severe level that her disease progressed to, it was a no-brainer to her parents that the treatment had to be done. My granddaughter could barely function on a day to day basis.

I never expected that my college-educated daughter and her college-educated husband, equipped with excellent careers who had the best of fringe benefits would come to me asking me to dip into my 401K retirement savings to help pay for the \$12,000 treatment.

Of course I did not blink an eye at the thought of giving up the amount that they asked for. I would have given it all to help my granddaughter even have the slightest improvement from her emotional, physical, and mental trauma that was chipping away at her existence day after day.

My daughter decided to fight for what she believed to be the right thing to do before using our savings. She fought her insurer's denials for 4 entire months.

For those four months, we watched my granddaughter lose her will to keep fighting, lose her spunk, lose her humor, lose herself. She became depressed and even threatened to kill herself.

I watched my daughter and her husband argue over what was the right and wrong thing to do. Over financials. I watched their other children slowly withdraw as parental attention became more focused on keeping my granddaughter safe.

I watched my daughter become depressed and ridden with anxiety as she made calls to her insurer everyday getting the scantiest of updates and being transferred and passed along from department to department and being given the runaround. She never gave up.

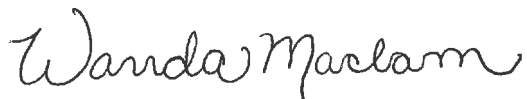
After four months, my daughter's insurer had to pay for an external review company to review my granddaughter's case. Within 24 hours we received the call that the denials were overturned and that the IVIG had to be covered by insurance.

The IVIG once given as treatment to my granddaughter, helped her immensely as she returned to 100 percent herself, back to normal. How easy it would have been if IVIG could have been approved from the get-go and our family could have avoided all of the trauma and anxiety that we experienced.

The effects of the lack of insurance coverage for PANDAS/PANS currently is tearing families apart and affecting every single member of the family unit.

I am asking you to think of entire Ohio family units and vote yes for HB 488.

Sincerely,



Wanda Maclam

Grandmother of a child with PANDAS