

Good afternoon members of the Senate Healthcare committee Madame Chair Patterson, Vice Chair Knopp and Senator's Beyer, Heard and Manning Jr. as well as my State Rep Rachel Prusak. OOF it has been a long road to get here and finally meet with you all. I come before you to not only speak for myself as an eczema warrior but for all the eczema warriors and their families who suffer in silence here in our beautiful state. Suffering in silence because our voices and the voices of the providers who advocate for us continue to be ignored. Ignored by the insurance companies we pay premiums to for the right to have access to quality healthcare, including but not limited to treatment options, only for these same insurance companies to require we try "their" choice of treatment as opposed to the treatment prescribed by the provider who has received extensive training in this disease. This leads to delayed positive outcomes in terms of resolving eczema flares or at least making them manageable. Imagine having an itch so ferocious that no matter what you used to scratch it, you received no relief, or you scratch and scratch until you draw blood. Now imagine you're a pre teen or a teenager and have this itch, this insatiable, uncontrollable itch, is on your face, your eyes, your lips, your arms, your legs and it **REQUIRES** you to scratch, and scratch and scratch until it tells you...you're done and as a pre teen/teenager you become the butt of every joke, snicker, rude comment and eventually shunned. There is a mental toll having eczema that is just as weighty as the financial toll, because make no mistake parents will go broke buying the less effective treatment on the insurance formulary because something is better than nothing all the while trying to manage the emotional toll it's taking on their loved one and everyone in the family. It's cruel to make a patient wait for a trial and error period which is essentially **STEP THERAPY**. I urge you all to pass this much needed bill to allow patients, like myself and our loved ones the hope and dignity of fighting not with our hands tied behind our backs and the providers the ability to provide the care they studied so long and hard for. Together we can stop the itch that rashes!! I thank you. My fellow eczema warriors thank you and the National Eczema Association thanks you.