

Thank you Honorable Senators for this opportunity to submit a written testimony for Senate Bill #916 . I had hoped to be present to testify in person but due to Lyme related issues that isn't possible.

I don't know where I got Lyme disease. I have been all over the country and around all kinds of animals. I loved the outdoors and went hiking and camping often.

I wasn't diagnosed with Lyme until September 2011. However looking back I am sure I had it at least as far back as early 2001. It wasn't due to a lack of trying to figure out what was causing my variety of symptoms. Early 2001 I had sinus surgery hoping that would help my extreme fatigue. That July I had an enlarged lymph node in my neck removed. I'm sure it was never checked for Lyme and we never did figure out what was causing the reactive lymph node. Perhaps it was new allergies that were causing my fatigue; perhaps I just got every flu bug, or food poisoning that no one else got, or my shoes were causing my feet pain, or... While growing up I was aware of ticks but never realized they could carry such devastating illness.

Doctors in Oregon during the summer of 2008 through May 2011 didn't take me seriously. I was having such extreme fatigue that it was seriously affecting my ability to work. I had pain throughout my body, I was falling when my legs would collapse without warning, my throat would get sore frequently, I had dizziness and extreme vertigo and my brain fog affected every aspect of my life. It wasn't until I saw a Lyme literate ND in September 2011 that I was diagnosed with Lyme. I have been on antibiotics ever since. Due to my late stage Lyme at the time of my diagnosis, I may never get over this disease.

I have been unable to work since May 2011. I was 53 at the time, had a great job and loved what I did. I still am not healthy enough to work and it's caused all kinds of problems and challenges in my life. I have such severe back pain that I can barely walk some days and my walking is always affected even on my "good" days. I go for a new MRI today and will need surgery, as I needed surgery 4 years ago but was too sick to have it done. Then I didn't have health insurance as I was too sick to work. This is another expense that will be covered by Oregon Medicaid due to Lyme disease.

After nearly 20 years of working in State government, I am now on SNAP, Medicaid and have applied for Social Security Disability. Right now I have no income, I'm living with my daughter (who got her undergraduate and master's degree from Pacific University) in her 24' x 24' apartment. Lyme disease has affected every relationship I have. It's not the future I had envisioned for myself. I struggle every day to keep going.

Aggressive treatment is critical for me at the late stage of Lyme disease. It's a challenge getting adequate medical care in Oregon. Currently I am out of the antibiotics that are so vital to my progress as I have no income and no MD's in Oregon treat Lyme disease. If I do get SSD I can travel out of state to get the necessary treatment.

I ask you to please pass this Senate bill #916 and help all of us in Oregon who currently have a Lyme diagnosis and to help prevent devastating disability for those who can get a Lyme disease diagnosis much sooner. With adequate Lyme treatment they have a much brighter future to look forward to.

Respectfully,

Denise M Moudree

3/30/15