

Hello, my name is Chris Chytka and this is my wife Kara, and we are here in support of SB916. In 2001 at the age of 23 my wife's fine motor skills started to deteriorate. Her speech started to slur, and she had extreme joint pain and difficulty walking. She saw her PCP and they did not consider the possibility of Lyme disease even though she had recently spent three weeks in New York. We were referred to Neurologists and after months of testing the doctor at the MDA Clinic diagnosed her with ALS. His parting words of wisdom were to go home and make your wife comfortable, get her a wheel chair, and don't hold your children if you are worried about dropping them.

Kara being a stubborn Italian did not accept his advice and instead started to do her own research on ALS. In doing so she found others who were also diagnosed with ALS who were later diagnosed with Lyme. Kara contacted one of these people that lived in Texas and himself was an MD. He gave her the name and contact information of the doctor who had diagnosed him. We later contacted that doctor and asked if there was an MD close to us in Oregon, and he was not aware of one. So we travelled to San Francisco to see him and started a treatment for her Lyme and Co-infections.

We worked with a new PCP in Oregon in concert with the California doctor and Kara got treatment for one year. After that one year the PCP here in Oregon was told by the Infectious disease doctors and neurologists that it was impossible for her to have Lyme disease. With increasing pressure from those doctors our PCP stopped treatment even though Kara was showing signs of improvement. After her treatment stopped, Kara began to go downhill fast.

As she continued to get worse she required 24 hour care. In 2008 I had to quit my job as an apprentice pipe fitter to care for her, luckily the state has a program that allows me to care for her and raise our children. Since her treatment stopped, I lost my job, and gained 100lbs we lost all of our friends. The kids have had years of counselling and missed out on their mom being there for many milestones in their lives. We strongly believe that if we would have gotten early treatment, since with the year of treatment she had received she showed signs of improvement, she might have had a different outcome and would have been able to be a contributing member of society. We would still have our friends and our three children would have a healthy and able-bodied mother in their lives.

Thank you