

# Rep. Magnafici: Testifies in support of protecting insurance coverage for Wisconsin residents with preexisting conditions

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CONTACT: Rep. Gae Magnafici (608) 266-2365

MADISON – Representative Gae Magnafici (R-Dresser) testified in support of protecting insurance coverage for Wisconsin residents with preexisting conditions before the Assembly Committee on Health. Rep. Magnafici is a co-author of the legislation, which is Assembly Bill 1. The following is her prepared testimony.

Throughout my 35-year career as a nurse working primarily in pediatrics, I have seen firsthand the heartbreaking effects of patients losing their insurance coverage because of their preexisting conditions. Living with preexisting conditions has become a dark reality for many Wisconsinites. It is stressful enough to live with a debilitating condition or disease such as Crohn's, cancer, or an autoimmune disease, but the potential costs associated with the medical treatment of these conditions or diseases make the difficult road to recovery or a normal life even more daunting.

For example, a Remicade infusion, which is given every 4-8 weeks to patients with Crohn's disease, can cost over \$10,000 per infusion. Additionally, Crohn's disease can never be cured, only managed or controlled, and any delay in treatment can have a negative impact on a patient's health.

On far too many occasions, I have seen patients cancel their appointments due to a loss of insurance coverage. Often, these cancellations were scheduled treatments of

time-sensitive medications such as Remicade. It is never easy seeing a patient deal with serious illnesses, but seeing a patient's health problems be compounded by the stress of navigating the insurance process was heartbreaking, and my experience witnessing those situations was a driving factor behind my decision to run for office.

Throughout my career, I was an advocate for my patients, working with social workers and care management to ensure my patients located the appropriate resources to receive the care they needed. Today I continue that advocacy for them as I testify in favor of the Preexisting Condition Guaranteed Coverage Act.

Furthermore, this issue is one of the main concerns to the constituents of my district. This past summer, I traveled across my district campaigning and talking to residents of Burnett, Polk, and St. Croix counties. My conversations with residents across my district made one thing abundantly clear to me: that the people of northwestern Wisconsin strongly support ensuring that people with preexisting conditions are guaranteed access to health insurance. During my campaign, I promised the residents of the 28th District that I would fight to protect preexisting condition coverage.

Today, it is my privilege to testify before this committee and follow through with that promise. Currently, the Affordable Care Act prohibits health insurers from denying coverage to people because they have a preexisting condition. The Preexisting Condition Guaranteed Coverage Act will adopt that prohibition at the state level, ensuring that Wisconsin residents with preexisting conditions are guaranteed access to health insurance, no matter what the federal government may do to affect the Affordable Care Act. The Act guarantees the issuance of health insurance to all who apply for it, and it provides to residents of Wisconsin the peace of mind that comes with assured access to health insurance. For that reason, and for the advocacy of my patients, I testify today in support the Preexisting Condition Guaranteed Coverage Act.

I look forward to working with Governor Evers and the entire legislature, Republican and Democrat alike, to ensure that no resident of this great state is denied access to health insurance due to a preexisting condition.