

Your Support Wanted on Insurance Coverage Limits

Rockville, MD, November 6, 2008 - The summer and fall seasons have been very eventful. The FDA approved Amgen's Nplate, and there may soon be an announcement about GlaxoSmithKline's new product. Over the past several weeks, I have traveled to NYC, Los Angeles, and Cleveland and soon will travel to Washington DC and Houston helping to lead PDSA's regional meeting programs. During conversations with patients at these meetings, I have heard expressions of excitement and frustration with the launch of new ITP pharmaceutical products. The excitement of course, is that these new treatments offer the hope of improved health. Often, the frustration expressed is that inadequate insurance coverage limits pose barriers for patients needing access to pharmaceutical treatments. With annual costs for some pharmaceuticals reaching \$40,000 or more, this is a real issue. However, there is something you can do about it.

Legislation to address insurance coverage limits has been introduced by Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND). The Health Insurance Coverage Act, HR 6528 and S 2706 would phase in increases in private insurance minimum lifetime caps to \$10 million, and introduce annual inflationary adjustments based on the consumer price index. This legislation would apply to health plans offered to employers of 20 or more employees and also requests an Institute of Medicine study to examine how many patients reach their maximum coverage limits. **Since platelet disorder patients can easily reach their insurance coverage limits, the focus of this legislation should be of particular interest to individuals with chronic blood disorders.**

If you would like to learn more and add your voice in support of this legislation, here are some steps you can take:

- To learn more about the legislation, go to: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h110-6528>
- To contact your Representative or Senator to voice your support and ask them to add their name as cosponsors of HR 6528 or S 2706
 - Go to: www.congress.org, enter your zip code, then you will be directed to your representative or senator
 - You may also call the U.S. Capital and ask to speak with your representative or senator's legislative assistant (LA) focusing on HR 6528 or S 2706
 - Let the LA know who you are, and what state and district you are from and tell them you support this legislation and why (brief them on your situation)
 - Ask for their current position on this bill, ask that they cosponsor the legislation, and that you would like to receive a written response acknowledging your call to their office

PDSA believes in empowering patients and those who care for them by providing the latest information and resources. When I learned of this legislation, I thought you would want to know about it.

Craig Conway
Executive Director

PS: I would like to learn more about coverage issues you are experiencing. If you'd like to share your situation with me, please don't hesitate to call me.

About ITP

ITP, immune (idiopathic) thrombocytopenic purpura, is an autoimmune disease. In autoimmune diseases, the body mounts an immune attack toward one or more seemingly normal organ systems. In ITP, platelets are the target. They are marked as foreign by the immune system and eliminated in the spleen and sometimes, the liver. In addition to increased platelet destruction, some people with ITP also have impaired platelet production. Without a sufficient number of platelets, a person with ITP is subject to spontaneous bleeding or bruising.

About PDSA

The Platelet Disorder Support Association is dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with immune thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) and other platelet disorders through education, advocacy and research. For more information, please contact us at 1-87-PLATELET or visit our Web site at www.pdsa.org.

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