

April 28, 2021

Dear Members of Alabama's Congressional Delegation:

My name is Su Bette Crisp and I live in Oxford, Alabama. It is my understanding that the House Energy & Commerce Committee will meet May 4 and consider HR3, the Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now bill.

As someone who lives with multiple sclerosis, I appreciate the impact of high prescription drug copays and support efforts to reduce those costs for patients. However, I am concerned about provisions in HR3 that may affect the development of new treatments for illnesses like M.S. and/or block our access to new treatments when they are developed.

The bill would base drug prices on countries that control their costs, in part, by limiting patients' access to new treatments and medications.

In just one recent example, our FDA granted the drug ocrelizumab "breakthrough status" in 2016 and approved it to treat relapsing and primary progressive forms of MS in the United States in 2017. In the United Kingdom, the same drug was not available until 2018 for those with relapsing MS and until 2019 for those with primary progressive MS. The U.K. provided access only after a hard-fought battle from the patient community.

As a person living with Primary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis, this bill scares me to death. Ocrevous (ocrelizumab) was the first ever medication available to slow the progression of the type of MS that I have. Who knows how long it will take for any other medication to become available? This bill would eat into the little time we have left.

Those of us who live with MS should not have to wait years for access to proven treatments that alleviate our symptoms or slow the progression of our disease. I ask you to remember patients as you consider HR3. For our sake, please make sure that you support policies that will make treatments more affordable – not more difficult to get.

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