



Testimony
New Hampshire Medicaid Pharmacy and Therapeutics Advisory Committee
June 19, 2008

I am Dr. Leslie Brody, President and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. I will be speaking today on behalf of the approximately 20,000 people in the state living with epilepsy. I want to thank the Legislature and the Medicaid Pharmacy and Therapeutics Advisory Committee for allowing us the opportunity to explain why any containment policy pertaining to anticonvulsant medications is not only a danger to the citizens of New Hampshire but a financial burden to the state.

Epilepsy is a condition that affects over 3 million people in the US alone. It costs the nation 15.5 billion in associated health care costs and unemployment. There is no cure and in 70% of cases there is no known cause. This condition is unpredictable. Patients are at the will of their doctors and their medications to control their seizures so they can live their lives confidently, independently and seizure free.

The Epilepsy Foundation has been and will continue to be opposed to cost containment policies that limit the access of patients to anti-epileptic drugs. Currently the FDA allows for a broad therapeutic range to exist within and between medications, generic to generic, brand name to brand name and brand to generic. The current method used for patients when prescribing anticonvulsant drugs can be, more often than not, trial and error; meaning frequent prescription changes and or mixing medications while observing blood levels and side effects to ensure the proper dosages to control a patient's seizures. By limiting the drugs available to doctors for prescription, the patient is put in the position of having a controllable condition that is left unpredictable by restrictive drug formularies.

We understand the issue at hand is cost – however, cost means more than dollars and cents. When we become so focused on the bottom line, we often overlook the more intangible factors, such as the psychological cost to a citizen who watches their independence be stripped as they are no longer allowed to hold a drivers license; and the social cost to intelligent and capable individuals on not being allowed to exercise their skills due to unemployment caused by an inability to access medications that could control their seizures.

Ultimately financial savings associated with restrictive drug formularies will only be shifted to state costs in emergency medical care, seizure related injury, public safety and unemployment. A preferred drug as determined by the state is not always the right drug for an individual and their condition. It is the safety of not only the patient but New Hampshire citizens that is at stake. The Foundation and I firmly believe that there must



be no restrictions related to anti-epileptic drugs and that the Committee with the safety and security of its citizens in mind, rule accordingly. Thank you so much for your time.