

My name is Regina Olmstead, and I live in Luthersville, Georgia and am 57 years old. I am a lupus patient with diabetes, diabetic neuropathy and many more problems, including hypogammaglobulinemia. In 2009 I spent almost a month on an oscillating ventilator and in a drug induced coma. Until February 2020, I was only on Medicare, but since then have had ChampVA through my husband as a secondary insurance. Before I had ChampVA, I had a lot of problems accessing my medicine. Mainly because we didn't have the money and couldn't afford the difference when Medicare refused to pay or I was in the donut hole. The biggest problem I had, when only having Medicare, was getting insulin for my diabetes. I had to rely on my doctor giving me samples or I'd have to go without. No pharmaceutical will help Medicare patients like they do private insurance patients. Since insulin prices were addressed, though, I haven't had problems. Unfortunately though, going without my insulin permanently harmed me. My neuropathy got really bad and once that damage is done, it can't be reversed.

In the past, I've also had to fail on medicines that were cheaper or ones that were older before I was able to get the more recent/innovative medicines. As a 40 year lupus patient, I am hopeful in the new medicines that are being researched/in the pipeline. Also as a patient, I am supportive of ways to address drug prices. However, the current proposal HR 3 worries me. If this bill passes, I likely won't have access to the newest, most innovative drugs for many years. Please protect us, reject HR 3 and try to find alternatives to address healthcare costs.

Thank you,  
Regina Olmstead