

Read How Cancer Survivors and LLS Advocates Are Taking Action Against the Rising Cost of Cancer Care



Paul O'Hara, Cancer Survivor & LLS Advocate, Pennsylvania

In 2009, Paul was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia at the age of 43. He has since become an active LLS advocate for oral parity laws, which guarantee equitable cost-sharing for cancer therapies taken orally and those received via infusion in a hospital or clinic. Paul was personally affected by this inequity and faced having to decide between paying his mortgage and paying the extreme out-of-pocket costs, to get the treatment he needed to stay alive which for him was up to \$1,000 a month. Paul made the choice to forgo his lifesaving treatment for weeks at a time, when he simply did not have the money. Paul played an active role in the Pennsylvania Oral Parity campaign, seeing the bill signed into law in 2016, and continues to advocate with LLS for parity legislation at the federal level.



Tiffany Yarina, Cancer Survivor & LLS Advocate, New Jersey

In 2005, Tiffany was a successful college student and member of the National Guard preparing to deploy to Iraq when she was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. But surviving lymphoma wasn't the most challenging obstacle for her; affording the treatment was. Currently in remission, she is still struggling to manage the debt from her out-of-pocket treatment costs as well as continued healthcare costs related to treatment side effects. As a pharmacy technician, Tiffany talks to patients every day who are unable to afford the treatments their doctors recommend. She can relate and continues to face impossible decisions – whether to spend her limited funds on healthcare or the needs of her nine-year-old son.



Sharon Clark, Cancer Survivor & LLS Advocate, Delaware

Sharon was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2015. Her treatment included multiple courses of oral anti-cancer medication, countless injections, infusions, hospitalizations, a stem cell transplant and two spinal surgeries to repair cracked bones. She continues to be treated with oral anti-cancer therapy just to keep her cancer in remission. A one-month prescription with partial coverage costs her \$2,000 out-of-pocket for the first several months of every year. At one point, Sharon's financial assistance funding ran out, and she had to stop taking her medications for two consecutive months because she simply did not have the money. As an LLS advocate, she shared her courageous story with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



Sam Bloechl, Cancer Survivor & LLS Advocate, Illinois

Sam is a 29-year old cancer survivor, LLS advocate and small business owner. Being self-employed, Sam thought he took the right steps to purchase a good health insurance plan. But when he was diagnosed with stage IV non-Hodgkin lymphoma during his policy period with UnitedHealth Group's Golden Rule, he learned he had purchased a short-term limited duration policy. He was never told this by the insurance company. Six months into Sam's treatment, Golden Rule declared his cancer a pre-existing condition, citing back pain and chiropractor appointments – something his insurance broker had dismissed. While he argued for coverage, he was forced to do nine additional rounds of maintenance chemotherapy, delaying his recovery. In the end, his claim was denied leaving him with \$800,000 in medical bills and no meaningful health insurance to pay for a potentially lifesaving transplant. Sam testified before a Congressional committee in opposition to junk insurance plans.



Barbara Borrell, Cancer Survivor & LLS Advocate, Florida

A three-time blood cancer survivor, Barbara was first diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) in 1993 at 50 years old. Due to the high costs of her cancer treatment, she has had to declare bankruptcy twice. LLS's co-pay assistance program, travel assistance funds and Hurricane Relief funds have helped her with medical expenses, but she knows not all cancer patients qualify for financial support. Barbara has attended National Congressional meetings in Washington, D.C. to make legislators aware of the challenges patients with cancer face to survive with the high cost of care. She also volunteers through LLS's Patti Robinson Kaufmann First Connection program, which connects patients and families with individuals who have personally experienced the challenges of dealing with blood cancer.