



**SEIUHealthcare**  
United for Quality Care

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Sharon Thorstenston  
Home Care Consumer  
Southington

SEIU District 1199 New England  
Before the Appropriations Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and the members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Sharon Thorstenston and I live in Southington. I'm a Consumer Employer who receives PCA services in my home. I became disabled due to my diagnosis of demyelinating spinal cord disease. I have tremors, and my whole life has been hijacked and held hostage by excruciating pain. I'm ever so grateful that I have PCAs, but the system that I am allowed to receive care in has so many problems.

For starters, I need to be cared for by my son because anybody else probably would've quit by now. He goes above and beyond the time that he gets paid through my budget and it's not fair to him but the state won't acknowledge that I need more hours. They need to respect the fact that I do need more time and allow me more help. I am tired of them telling me I don't need more hours and denying medical procedures that are needed for my health. For instance, I've been denied MRIs with contrast. I've been denied dental care because oh it's not covered anymore, all different types of things that my doctors are requesting and the state just denies them.

Then there are the issues with Allied. Last year, I had 3 PCAs who constantly had problems getting paid on time by Allied. They went so far as to drop off their timesheets directly, in addition to us faxing AND emailing their timesheets. Eventually, they quit because of their frustrations which meant I had to go without care and go back on the hunt for new PCAs. It was an incredibly stressful situation for me but I don't blame them for quitting because it was their livelihood. One of them was even getting evicted.

At least once a month, there's a problem with payroll. When Allied finally answers the phones after you've been on hold an hour, they'll sometimes refuse to transfer you to payroll. And the customer service reps may not even know what the problem is. Once, I called to see what the problem was and the customer service rep said "I don't see any notes in your file. Maybe your fax was too dark." And I responded: I emailed them in a pdf. I told her I was looking at my sent mail and they were clear as day. It boggles the mind that after spending hours on hold they can't always tell you exactly what's wrong.

The Medicaid waiver program that I receive care through is a really good system for people like me. But there are some really big problems that the Department of Social Services refuses to look at and improve. Please help consumers like me and the PCA's that work for me by holding Allied responsible.