Lessons Learned From Falling Over the Edge

I can no longer continue to let these difficult and painful hits to my life completely throw me off course and into a tailspin.

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Last week was another tough one to get through. I've been having difficulty getting my short-term disability claim approved. What set me over the edge was a call from the benefits specialist last Wednesday. He's the one assigned to my claim. He received the paperwork from the Northside Primary Care office but was surprised by the physician's statement. All she wrote was I was suffering from anxiety, depression and bipolar. WTF?!

I literally lost it for a few minutes. She mentioned nothing about the chronic pain, chronic fatigue or the number of infections I've suffered almost every month for the past six months. I felt betrayed. I felt like I had punched hard in the gut. Why?

I posted in my Facebook cancer support groups of what transpired to get thoughts on it. Many said maybe she was trying to set me up for permanent disability or maybe she wrote the wrong thing and it was meant for another patient. All those comments were disheartening and concerning. I had left messages for the doctor and her nurse via phone and through the portal. No response.

Why would a doctor write this and not notify me first?

Since Monday was a holiday, I let it go. I called first thing on Tuesday and asked to speak to her supervisor. In the end, I spoke directly with the clinical director. He said he would review my case, speak with the doctor and get back to me later that day. I was impressed because he kept his word and called that evening.

He explained that she wrote that diagnosis in her physician's statement in order to get me approved. I said that all well and good, but she did not reference anything else. He agreed she should've notified me what she planning to put in her statement. The issue is nothing she said backed up what Emory Palliative Care and I wrote. How could she leave all the rest out?

The clinical director was impressive. He told me he would call my benefits specialist to clear up any confusion and send whatever additional paperwork that was requested. He told me he would call me Wednesday.

I received the call yesterday evening. The clinical director told me what he said to the benefits specialist, that my claim is being reviewed by the insurance's doctors and now waiting on a decision. He answered all questions, kept that original doctor's diagnosis and added the rest of what we discussed.

I told him the issue is the doctor never notified me or returned any of my calls. He agreed. At that point, I felt heard and can let this go. I did tell him to notate in my file that I never want to be treated by that doctor again.

So, now I'm waiting on a decision from the insurance company. I've been without income going on four weeks. Thank God for my previous church and my mother. That's the only reason I can even breathe and finally not stress. Do I feel guilty and ashamed for asking for financial help? A little. I also know when to let pride go and ask for what I need.

My emotions are finally stable again thanks to Lexapro. I realized last week that I needed to get back on an antidepressant. I needed that buffer it gives me to handle the intensity of my emotions. I didn't want to and fought it at first, but know I made the right decision. The Lexapro in the morning and CBD oil with THC in the evening helps take the edge off.

Putting my health first continues to come at a cost. I was born premature and sick from birth. It's exhausting and expensive taking care of myself. There have been moments where I've felt strong and even invincible. Those days are long gone.

All I can do now is prep for my surgery on Monday, work on understanding this chronic pain and taking care of my mental health. Maybe that is the lesson I needed to learn. I can no longer continue to let these difficult and painful hits to my life completely throw me off course and into a tailspin. I need to stop being so reactive so I can focus on being proactive.

Until next time,

Warrior Megsie

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