Comments from Public #2

My name is [redacted]. I'm a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the United States Air Force. I've been married twenty-two years and have an eleven-year old daughter. I have twenty-one years of active service. I spent fourteen of those twenty-one years with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). After completing my Master's Degree requirements in 1988, my MS symptoms began. No treatments were available.

The first medication available was Betaseron, which I started in February of 1995. When Avonex became available, my doctor suggested I consider changing medications because Avonex seemed to meet my needs better. In September of 1996, I started using Avonex. I had very few side effects and the once-a-week injection was more convenient for travel.

The FDA approved another medication for treating relapsing-remitting MS: Rebif. Being a former intelligence officer with an investigative mind, I thought I would try Rebif. My doctor reluctantly gave me his blessings. I experienced some rather severe side effects and quickly returned to Avonex.

I have always been an extremely active person. I played varsity basketball at VA Tech, ran track and have enjoyed a variety of other sports. I even played basketball for Peterson Air Force Base's Women's Basketball team following my first MS exacerbation.

Multiple Sclerosis is a chronic, progressive disease. It attacks our central nervous system, the core of our bodies and the core of our beings. Everyone is vulnerable! Yes, being told you have MS can send you into a tailspin, but in the same breath, the doctor can tell you about a variety of medications that you can have at "no cost" or "very little cost."

These medications are essential to maintaining a quality force. Without this medicine, the money the American people invested in me would have been lost. My career would have ended abruptly. We owe it to the American people to seek every opportunity to capitalize on their investments. It is a win-win situation. Military members must know their country is behind them 100 percent. That 100 percent includes the medications to treat relapsing-remitting MS. Avonex must be part of the survival kit.

Thank you

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Lt Col, USAF (retired)