

April 14, 2026

**Re: Support for S2455 — Scalp Cooling Insurance Coverage**

Dear Chair Melissa Murray and Members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Alexis J. Thompson and I write to express my strong support for S2455, which mandates that insurance providers cover scalp cooling treatments for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Scalp cooling helps retain hair during chemotherapy, offering patients dignity and reducing the outward psychological burden of treatment. And it works!

Insurance coverage is essential for access, as the out-of-pocket costs are currently prohibitive for most Rhode Islanders. To imagine that only those of means could access this treatment is to acquiesce to the fundamental inequities caused by the wealth gap in our state and country. Let's continue to chip away at this problem with the passage of this legislation.

I often describe my mother as having been small, but big. She was a tiny woman with a very large presence. She was the Dean of Undergraduate Biology at Brown for 30 years (a beloved professor and cherished advisor to thousands of undergrads and medical students), a country blues singer-songwriter who recorded numerous albums and performed all over the country, and she and my father had 7 kids of which I am the eldest.

When she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2009 she was also very clear that she did not want to be detected as being in treatment. She wanted to continue right along doing all the things she did without having to stop and explain anything, or even talk about it at all, if I'm being honest. Losing her hair was not an option, as far as she was concerned.

As was her way, she made this a reality. She researched the then obscure cold caps which were really only used overseas at that point, was able to purchase a set, bought a big rolling cooler, and got a local line on the dry ice needed to keep the caps at the right temperature for effectiveness. With a constant rotation of the caps on dry ice during each chemo treatment (a laborious task that her best friend undertook at every session, and that not all the nurses were thrilled about), she succeeded.

And, as was also her way, based on her research and experience she also acted as a teacher and advisor to many people around the country who wanted to use cold caps - creating a how-to guide when there was little information or buy-in on this method.

If she was living, she would be here championing this cause before you today. The effectiveness of this treatment (which has since improved with pump technology for constant cooling in some versions) is one that all people deserve to have access to should they wish.

I urge this committee to vote S2455 out of committee and help alleviate the financial burden on patients managing the taxing effects of chemotherapy.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

Alexis J. Thompson, alexisjthompson@gmail.com