

# Conner Brennan's Public Testimony for the November 25, 2019 Joint Assembly-Senate Hearing on the New York Health Act November 25, 2019

Hello, my name is Conner Brennan. I am a carpenter and I live in Cold Spring, New York. I am here to speak for someone who cannot be here today. I am here to speak for my uncle Rob who died of pancreatic cancer on August 28, 2018. Rob, otherwise known as "Biker Bob" was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer two months before his death. This was devastating news but he had a loving family to support him through such trying times. His doctor scheduled chemotherapy sessions and I believe Rob was supposed to start on a Tuesday. That Monday, the day before he was set to begin his treatment, he received a call from the chemo center asking through what insurance was he covered. He replied that he didn't have insurance. They asked if he had the money to pay upfront and in full. He did not. They cancelled my uncle's chemotherapy one day before it was scheduled to begin and my uncle died three weeks later.

Between his denial and his death, my mother scrambled to get my uncle his chemotherapy. She spent hours on the phone and was finally able to find an advocate that would help Rob. She negotiated with the chemo center and got Rob two free chemo sessions, but at this point, after all that he had been through, Rob came to accept his fate and didn't want the treatment. He didn't want to jump through anymore hoops; he just wanted to die with his family by his side.

Do you know what it's like to see a grown man cry. To see someone's will to live evaporate as he was told his life wasn't worthy because he couldn't pay. In his precious last moments, my uncle wasted his time fighting to get healthcare in the richest country in the world when he should have been spending that time with his family. I ask you legislators- Would you want to spend your last moments like my uncle?

I was not able to speak to my uncle Rob before he died, but I hope I can make it up to him by sharing his story. I want to make sure that what happened to my uncle never happens to anyone else. People shouldn't be denied care because they don't have insurance. Please join me in this effort and vote yes to the New York Health Act so we can prevent such needless cruelty.