

Amanda Reynolds: MO HealthNet - Realized and In Action



Amanda Reynolds, Missouri, is one of the newest enrollees to qualify with the recent expansion of MO HealthNet. Amanda has dealt with health issues for years from the chemotherapy and surgeries to treat cancer she had as a small child. After three unsuccessful attempts to get accessible and affordable health insurance coverage, Amanda's fourth attempt to enroll in MO HealthNet was the answer to her prayers.

"I'm a long-time cancer survivor and current patient who has had six different forms of cancer, off and on, since I was four and a half years old. In October 2021, I had surgery number 29 to remove cancer in my left breast."

"Now that I'm enrolled in MO HealthNet, I've been able to see a doctor. The first thing the doctor said to me is that this health insurance opens a whole new world for me to get care. So, it was a major relief."

A physical to enter kindergarten had her worried parents taking her to a physician in the early 1960's. Three days later, she was diagnosed with Wilms Tumors, a type of kidney cancer in children that, at the time, was treated with clinical trials. Although she has vague memories of kindergarten, she will tell you that she has "never not known cancer."

Amanda was able to attend the beginning of first grade and went on to graduate high school. Outwardly I did not look like a cancer survivor, but I was a first grader with one lung and half of my stomach. I was a cancer survivor. By the time I graduated, I had 14 surgeries that were all covered under my parents' insurance."



Amanda (pictured center) with her siblings around the time of her first cancer diagnosis.



When Amanda married, her husband's plan provided the much-needed coverage for her continued surgeries, cancer screenings, treatments and eventually, the births of her two sons. Her sons were a surprise for a survivor of childhood cancer that was told early on that she would never be able to conceive.

Changes in Amanda's personal life meant that by 2018 she was in the coverage gap. After four years of being uninsured, Medicaid expansion is the lifeline that gives Amanda access to the necessary scans to keep her cancer under control.

As a grandmother to nine grandchildren, Amanda feels that MO HealthNet is a blessing. Prior to gaining coverage Amanda knew that she needed to see a doctor. She's developed an innate sense of recognizing changes within her body given her lifelong experience with the disease. "I am MO HealthNet realized and in action. This program gives me the hope I haven't had for as long as I can remember."