Tuesday 6th November 2012

To whom it may concern

I am a 63 year old woman, who is self employed, requiring many hours of standing on my feet. I'm a food producer and this venous ulcer has caused me much heartache with many months off work and with nobody to take over it has cost me in more ways than one.

In September 2009, I was diagnosed with a venous ulcer, of the left ankle which took 11 months to heal. I had numerous treatments at Austin Health wound clinic, trialling topical dressings & medicine to stop the thing in its tracks, but having a background of Rheumatoid Arthritis, everything I seemed to be given was painfully rejected. The ulcer split within a month of healing and once more I was on the roundabout of what to be given. What worked for me the last time again was rejected by the Rhuematoid Arthritis, this time it took 10 months to heal and in the process I begged the Doctors to cut the ankle off. The pain is indescribable it is like someone shoving several knives through the middle of it and no end of pain killers not doing their job. With the aid of silicone dressings it finally healed but in the process, I kept falling due to muscle wastage so it was suggested by my Rhuematologist at Austin Health I go to the hospital gym to build up strength. It was suggested by one of the physiotherapists to get a pair of runners particularly for the exercise bike and within a few short weeks the ulcer had split again. This happened in December 2011, it still has not healed. I have now seen specialists from Rhuemo/ortho and Plastics with the hope of a skin graft. I had a biopsy done on the 18th October with 6 local injections, I cannot begin to tell you how much I have suffered since. My results came back a week later with me being told I had venous stasis meaning the blood could pump its way down into the ankle but it couldnt pump its way back up, unless my foot was above my heart constantly Being given this news didn't impress.

A friend suggested the hyperbaric chamber so I did some research and upon finding they treated venous ulcers and with success, I rang. I was bitterly disappointed to find the government funding had been cut within a couple of days of my ringing. There is no way I can afford to pay for treatment on my own and cant understand why the funding has been pulled. This ulcer has prevented me from flying, I couldn't get to see my mother who passed away in 2010 in New Zealand and I also couldn't get to the funeral or to give my sister a hand in the process, due to not being able to fly.

Do I have to put up with this ulcer for the rest of my life knowing there is treatment out there but cant afford it. Put yourself in my position, my painkillers per day are as follows: I take tramadol 100mg at 4.30am I take panadol osteo every 6-7 hrs and I take another

tramadol 100mg at 4.30pm. If the pain doesn't dissipate within any of those times I have the option of taking a further tramadol 50mg but cannot go over 400mg in any day.

I don't want to be on painkillers for the rest of my life. I want to live as normally as I possibly can but cutting funding has destroyed any hope of me believing it could happen.

I called Hyperbaric Health last Thursday and they advised me that the funding had been terminated for my condition one day earlier. I have tried everything else and now have nowhere to go.

Yours sincerely,

Lynne Cochrane