

March 7, 2024

Dear Chair Klein and Committee Members:

I'm reaching out to express my support for SF4423. I have worked with a number of patients who had difficulty affording a wig when they have lost their hair due to chemo. Two in particular come to mind.

One woman had very long, beautiful hair, and was from a culture that values long (not cut) hair. She was devastated to lose her hair and all that would mean for her culturally. Having a wig as her hair option was not her ideal situation but was preferred to wearing a hat or having a bald head. She was able to access a grant that paid for her wig; however, she also would have benefitted from being able to utilize that money towards her living costs. She then had to scramble to pay her rent, utilities, and groceries.

Another example is of a woman that I worked with who had a very people-facing job. She was having a lot of anticipatory anxiety around knowing she would be losing her hair and knowing that many people would ask her about her hair loss. With that, she knew there would be pressure to tell coworkers and strangers about her cancer and medical conditions. She wanted to keep that private and share on her own terms, and a realistic wig may have been able to help her with some of that anxiety.

Many of the wigs offered at a discount or affordable price are of poor quality and not very realistic looking. Some of them require other headpieces to be worn with them or are cumbersome. One of the only free wig organizations is only for folks with breast cancer, and the wig they provide is a bright pink bob-style wig. This is a fun option for a select group of people, but certainly not an option for all people who lose their hair due to their cancer treatment. Having access to quality wigs, without a major cost barrier, would be incredibly helpful for many of our patients.

Sincerely,
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