



## Colorado Health Care Stories

### Rachel Wall, Aurora



12.25.2008  
98 pounds,  
Constant Pain



“Before the ACA, I could not get health insurance due to a ‘pre-existing condition’ of pelvic congestive syndrome, which I was born with and had absolutely no control over.

I was also born with Hereditary Angioedema, which went undiagnosed until I was 25. I went undiagnosed for so long because it wasn’t until the ACA passed that I could afford insurance and get access to the specialists who finally diagnosed me. Before this diagnosis and treatment, I couldn’t absorb most of what I ate, was dangerously underweight, suffered debilitating abdominal pain almost daily, could not breathe well due to excessive mucus in my lungs, and had three inguinal hernias caused by constant coughing in effort to clear my lungs. I had no energy, and couldn’t even get up a flight of stairs without being out of breath.

After the ACA passed, and you could no longer be held responsible for the way you were born, and I was able

to get coverage. Now that my body is capable, I am a triathlete. In the last two years, I was able to complete two different half ironman triathlons. It’s so crucial that I keep my coverage. It’s been an incredible asset to my life.”

### Jim, Aurora

Three years ago, Jim was insured and came down with walking pneumonia. He went to the 9-news fair, and got some assistance to help him get insurance through Connect for Health Colorado. He receives tax credits through the ACA, and couldn’t afford his coverage without that financial assistance.

His life improved dramatically after he got insured. He was able to see a doctor for his walking pneumonia, and that doctor referred him to a pulmonologist, who diagnosed him with COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). He now uses a CPAP machine to help him breath.

Jim has struggled with various types of addiction throughout his life. He used to drink and do cocaine frequently, but was able to quit those habits “with the help of the man upstairs.” But it was only with the help of his doctor that he was able to finally quit smoking.

Jim is tremendously thankful for the ACA and his coverage: “If I wouldn’t have had health insurance, my life would suck right now. I don’t know what I would be doing...regardless of politics, I believe everybody deserves good health care. I think there are some problems with this program. But I don’t care—I’m just grateful that I have health insurance. I’m hoping that no matter what happened with this election, I hope that everyone in America can have good health care.”