

Chrystal Gay's Injured Worker Horror Story

“ I used to be an avid runner before my accident at work. Now, I can barely walk or do daily household chores. I have been denied to date every course of treatment recommended to me. My young daughter wonders if I'll die from constant pain.”



About Me: My name is Chrystal Gay. I am 32 and live in Long Beach.

My Family: I am a single mother of an 8 year old daughter, Piper.

My Job and What Happened: I worked as an Educational Advisor for an online University. On July 24th, 2002, I was finishing my lunch with co-workers when I slipped on water inside the cafeteria. I was thrown up in the air and landed straight on my chin. Initially my injury was to my jaw and a herniated disc in my neck. Due to lack of medical care, my jaw injury is totally unrepairable! The workers comp insurer sent me back to work without the care I needed and told me to just type and not talk. My neck injury got much worse. The damaged discs have now caused degenerative disease, nerve root impingement and increased pain. I cannot grasp things and can't return to my field of work as I can no longer type without losing feeling in my arms. I have developed neurological problems and suffer from migraines.

What this has meant to my life: I've lost my life completely! All the recommended pain medications have been cut off and denied for two years now. I have gone from being able to deal with the pain to being bedridden and suffering. My marriage has fallen apart and we have separated. My daughter is afraid that her mom will die from the pain. I was going to school when the accident occurred and cannot return. I now have school loans to repay. I was recommended for oral surgery but the insurer told me that there were no oral surgeons in their network. I came to find out there are actually 83 oral surgeons in their network. The doctors' recommendations for treatment have been ignored and denied.

How the Governor's Workers' Comp Law Affects Me

How Workers' Comp was supposed to help me: Workers compensation insurance was to help me heal and provide me with support. There's no way to get better when the insurer ignores every medical recommendation. I've taken the insurer to court several times, only to win but have them ignore the decisions. There's no meaningful penalty for their actions. The system is not about fixing the worker. It's more like, "Let's get rid of the worker as quickly and cheaply as possible."

www.VotersInjuredatWork.org

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