

# PROOF THAT APPEALS WORK

## BARBARA PRESSLEY'S STORY



Name: Barbara Pressley

Residence: Whitehall, MI

Diagnosis: Multiple Sclerosis

Date of Onset: 1976

Height: 5'5"

Stander: EasyStand 5000

Standing in EasyStand Since: August 2004

Barbara was diagnosed with a slow progressive form of Multiple Sclerosis (MS), which over the past 30 years has caused her to lose strength and mobility. Although she has not been able to walk for eleven years, she was still able to stand without assistance for up to 30 minutes at a time. This changed about 3 years ago when she began needing the assistance of one of her CNA's (Certified Nursing Assistant) to stand. She remarks, "Standing is something that people just take for granted until they can't." Standing with the CNA's assistance became limited to 10-15 minutes since they only worked with Barbara 7 hours a day, "I was losing my ability to bear weight on my legs and knew I had to find a way to increase my standing time. My goal was to continue to stand and remain as active as possible." She continues, "With my EasyStand I am able to stand in an upright position for 30 minutes or more at a time. Standing has strengthened my legs, decreased my muscle contractures, improved my circulation, and relieves the pressure and stiffness caused by sitting for 15 hours a day."



Barbara Pressley keeps herself very busy helping others. She is an active volunteer with the American Red Cross where she was honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award in May, 2005. For over 10 years she has organized and led a MS support group in her area. She was also the president and office manager for the Disability Awareness Council for 8 years. Barbara also coordinated the Attitudes program for the Muskegon County Intermediate School District, which teaches elementary students that people with disabilities are the same as everyone else, they just do things differently.

**CHALLENGE:** CONTINUE TO BEAR WEIGHT ON HER LEGS IN A WAY THAT IS SAFE AND EASY.

**SOLUTION:** THE EASYSTAND (INSTEAD OF A CNA), SUPPORTS BARBARA IN THE STANDING POSITION, ALLOWING HER TO SAFELY STAND FOR LONGER PERIODS OF TIME.

When Barbara is not volunteering she spends lots of fun-filled time with her two daughters and three grandchildren that live close to her. "When I'm standing, the grandchildren will stand on a stool in front of me and we'll play games or read books." At Altimate Medical we first met Barbara when she wrote to us after watching our "Life After Spinal Cord Injury" video. She commented, "I just finished watching your video and would like to tell you how impressed I am with it. I hope that you have been able to distribute it to lots of rehab centers. It shows such a positive attitude of life in a wheelchair. It's great to see other wheelchair users doing so many 'normal' activities. I hope to share it with fellow MS'ers."

**CHALLENGE:** GET SECONDARY INSURANCE TO COVER THE PORTION MEDICARE DIDN'T PAY.

**SOLUTION:** CONTINUE TO APPEAL, GET DOCTOR AND THERAPIST TO WRITE A STRONG LETTER OF MEDICAL NECESSITY, DON'T GIVE UP!

**STANDING PROGRAM:** STANDS DAILY 30 MINUTES AT A TIME



Barbara saw her first standing frame when she attended a Disabilities Expo in St. Louis, Missouri. She kept the information that she received for a time when she might need it. Several years later she decided that a stander would help her and consulted her physical therapist about standing and its benefits. Barbara comments, "Even though I was aware of the stander and its benefits, I knew that the cost was prohibitive so I started to do some research online." This began the journey of obtaining funding for her EasyStand 5000.

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First, she contacted a couple local medical equipment suppliers that sold standing frames. Then her physical therapist worked with a supplier to set up a time for Barbara to trial an EasyStand. After trying the stander, the supplier then filed with Medicare to pre-approve payment for her stander. Barbara's physical therapist wrote a letter of medical necessity and her neurologist wrote a prescription. Then she waited for approval. Barbara explains, "After a few months of getting nowhere with pre-approval and because it was getting more and more difficult to stand independently (without a stander), I decided to use my credit card to pay for the stander outright and fight with Medicare for payment while I was using the stander."

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Barbara was glad she took the initiative to purchase the stander on her own because getting Medicare to pay for her stander was not easy. She appealed four times and finally received payment. She remarks, "With my last appeal my family doctor wrote a very strong letter of support. That was very helpful." It took her from August 2004 until February 2006 to receive payment from Medicare. Then she submitted paperwork to Michigan Medicaid to reimburse the remaining \$1200. She adds, "I've heard nothing from them at this point and was told it could take a year to receive that payment." Regardless of Barbara's funding challenges, she couldn't be happier with her stander. Being able to bear weight on her legs again has improved her health overall so she is happy she bought the EasyStand when she did. Barbara's advice on funding is straight forward, "Don't give up!" Barbara's story is proof that appeals work.

**STANDING ACTIVITIES:**  
PLAYING WITH GRANDCHILDREN  
READING  
CHATTING WITH FRIENDS  
WATCHING TV

**MEDICAL BENEFITS:** INCREASES STRENGTH  
DECREASES MUSCLE CONTRACTURES  
IMPROVES CIRCULATION  
RELIEVES PRESSURE & STIFFNESS

**FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS:**  
PERFORMING "NORMAL" ACTIVITIES  
REMAINING ACTIVE



"Don't give up! I appealed 4 times. With my last appeal my family doctor wrote a very strong letter of support. That was very helpful."

