



## SAN FRANCISCO WOMEN BENEFIT FROM THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Amanda Selich: The Affordable Care Act Has Given Me My Life Back

My story started in the weeks leading up to my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. During that time I was undergoing several doctors' visits and tests to uncover the cause of my sudden and extreme abdominal pain. It was a slow process but I was assured that progress was being made towards reaching a diagnosis. Unfortunately, for me time shortly ran out and after I turned 19 I was immediately kicked off my dad's insurance policy. My 19<sup>th</sup> birthday was here but what I thought would be a memorable and amazing day actually marked the beginning of a two year journey full of pain, despair, and hopelessness. I was 19 had no insurance and was in desperate need of a doctor. Not being able to afford hospital bills I was left to my own devices. I started self-medicating, and now I was using the internet as my doctor. Taking any information I could find and prescribing myself the herbs, vitamins, and over the counter pain relievers that I thought would work. It was a dangerous game of hit or miss and I took that risk without ever knowing what I was attempting to treat.

During those two years my health had rapidly deteriorated, I couldn't go to school, I was missing work, and slowly I became a prisoner to my home and of my body. It wouldn't be until I was 22 that I would be able to step into a hospital again.

The Affordable Care Act gave me that privilege. It felt like a miracle. It was my dream come true. And this time it didn't take long for the doctors to come back and tell me the heartbreaking news that I had endometriosis. After enduring my first surgery my doctors again delivered upsetting news, they told me it's everywhere, my entire pelvic region was covered with adhesions and cysts they also made it very clear that the possibility of me ever having the chance to become a mother was extremely unlikely. It was my devastating reality that if only I was under doctor's care for those 2 years my endometriosis would have never evolved to this extent.

I am 24 now and today I am happy to say that my endometriosis is almost completely symptom free but as the days pass on my overwhelming desire to start a family grows stronger. Ironically my path to motherhood will depend almost entirely on birth control. Currently this is the only treatment available to me that stops my disease progression and preserves my fertility simultaneously. It's a great relief that this August I will no longer have the stress on my shoulders of trying to afford this medicine and still be able to pay for necessities every month. Thank you Leader Pelosi and everyone who made the Affordable Care Act possible. It truly has given me my life back.