

My name is Jessica Hamilton and I write to share my family's perspective on our experience with the drug Xolair. While not directly relevant to my testimony, I include some details about my educational background since it informs who I am as a human and a parent. I have degrees from UCSD (BA), UW (JD) and OHSU-PSU School of Public Health (MPH). I also have an adjunct faculty appointment at OHSU-PSU School of Public Health, where I teach graduate courses on environmental law and environmental health. I am a fulltime employee of the Port of Portland. And most importantly I am a parent of two lovely teenage boys (Evan and Connor), spouse of a wonderful husband (Brett) and daughter to two aging parents who still live in Portland.

My son, Evan Hamilton, who also shared his story, is a sixteen-year-old junior at [a Portland high school], a straight-A student and an elite soccer player. And he has life-threatening anaphylactic food allergies.

We learned of his allergy when he was not quite two years old. We were vacationing at our cabin on Mt Hood, and Evan had eaten a peanut butter sandwich and gone down for a nap. We heard him coughing in his sleep and woke him to discover hives all over his body and he was having difficulty breathing. Outside of cell service, we rushed him to the nearest medical facility where they injected him with EpiPen, steroids and antihistamine and called for an ambulance transport to a Randall Children's Hospital in Portland.

Since then, Evan has been diagnosed with allergies to all nuts, and also eggs. Fortunately in middle school he outgrew his allergies to almonds and peanuts and he recently told me the day he found out he could eat peanuts was one of the best days of his life.

Unfortunately despite our best efforts to avoid Evan's allergens, accidental exposure still occurs and we have one or two visits to the ER for allergy-related causes each year.

Although Evan has only been on Xolair for a few months, it has already been transformative. He travels a lot for soccer and I can relax knowing that if he accidentally is exposed to an allergen it is unlikely to result in a trip to the ER or worse. He is currently looking at colleges and it is much less stressful knowing he has an additional layer of protection against a life-threatening reaction that Xolair provides.

He has reported that since starting Xolair that when he eats products with eggs, such as mayonnaise or baked goods, he is not symptomatic.

I've seen how Evan has shed a layer of anxiety around food. And even though self-injecting Xolair is no fun, he does it readily and willingly and that's how I know how much it means to him.

We are grateful for the drug, for Evan's care providers who shared information and counseled us, and for the patient support programs, including the financial support and co-pay support from the drug manufacturer that makes this life-altering medication accessible for Evan.

Thank you for reading about my family's experience with Xolair and for your dedication to serving Oregonians as a member of the PDAB board.