

Susan L. Powell
Corvallis, Oregon

Oregon PDAB Board
Subject: Xolair

Xolair testimony July 28, 2026

I understand that the PDAB group will review the affordability of Xolair this year, and I wanted to endorse the Genentech program as well as share my experience with the drug. I was very discouraged when simple hives became major flare ups, and I didn't know how to treat them.

As a child, I was the only one of six daughters to have allergies. I was allergic to feathers, dust, pollen, cats, dogs, and probably more. The only assistance I got was a foam-rubber pillow. And I sneezed a lot.

In college, I took over-the-counter allergy pills as needed. When I was 22 years old, I saw an allergist, who said I reacted to 95% of all the allergens he tested on me. For two years I received prophylactic allergy injections for pollen, pet dander, and dust mites, which was all they could add to a single injection. The injections were no longer covered by my insurance when I turned 25.

When I moved to the Midwest, I encountered ragweed, pine pollen, and crop dust, which all caused intense sneezing. I was injected with cortisone twice, which diminished the symptoms, but could not be used long term.

Back in Oregon I got hives for the first time in 2012. Dr. Roland Solensky prescribed Clobetasol cream after he determined they were idiopathic. This prescription worked fairly well, but it is known to thin the skin permanently after 5-7 days. It also could not be used on my face. In addition, I took Zyrtec (cetirizine) twice a day, doubling the dosage to four pills per day in spring and summer per Dr. Solensky. I put covers on my mattress and pillows and bought a HEPA filter for the bedroom. I also took lukewarm showers and did not wear tight clothing. I used no dyes, fragrances, or chlorine for household products.

Last year, I had a sudden onset of hives that occurred on my torso, arms, and legs and was many times worse than the previous instances. I stayed inside my house, used the Clobetasol sparingly, and waited over three weeks for the itchy, burning bumps to go away. The itch is powerful, very similar to poison oak, but the bumps and welts do not weep and they don't respond to Benadryl.

On April 7 this year, I had another large flare up of hives. This time they appeared first on my jaw and neck, spread to my chest, arms, and onto my face. This was very alarming and

disfiguring, and I was miserable. Again, I stayed inside my house, canceling all outside activities, and used the Clobetasol cream for a week. I saw Dr. Solensky again, and he said there were new treatment options available that we could try. Since it looked like the flare was beginning to wane by April 22, he said to contact him if they returned.

Shortly after the flare stopped itching and spreading, they returned in the same areas as the previous inflammation plus it now covered my face. I immediately contacted Dr. Solensky, and he prescribed Xolair injections every four weeks. I received the first injection on May 22, and I waited in the office for two hours in case I developed anaphylaxis, which I did not. Within a week after the injection, the welts were noticeably smaller and less itchy. A few new spots appeared every day, but I treated them with Clobetasol and continued to take 4 tablets of Zyrtec per day. I felt like I was getting my life back.

On June 17, I received the second injection of Xolair, again waiting in the office for two hours. Again, there were no side effects. On June 24, twelve spots appeared, but they responded quickly to the Clobetasol. On July 1, three hives appeared on my right shoulder, which had not been affected before.

On July 16, I received the third Xolair injection, and again waited at the office and had no side effects. The nurse showed me how to self-administer Xolair. Because I had no side effects, I can give myself the injection at home. I also have an EpiPen, which I carry with me in case of anaphylaxis.

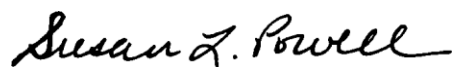
I have been hive free since July 7, and I have resumed my normal outdoor activities.

I was horrified to find that the annual cost of Xolair per year could be over \$30,000 before insurance or rebate. My insurance is a federal employee program, which would cover part of the cost, and I was unable to find out if the coverage was limited annually. I was very concerned because it is common for patients to use Xolair for life.

A representative from Genentech, which manufactures Xolair, contacted me. She said Genentech offered co-pay assistance for as long as I need it. I signed up for the program, and Genentech has covered my entire co-pay, while I only pay the co-pay for the physical injections.

I was very surprised that a large pharmaceutical company would offer to help patients like me. I hope that Xolair will become more affordable and that insurance companies cover the cost so others suffering from idiopathic hives can get their lives back.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan L. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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