Wisconsin Legislation Provides IBD Relief for over 25,000 Residents

Wisconsin has joined at least 12 other states in passing the Restroom Access Act, which grants relief to those who require an ostomy device or Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) patients. As of March 2010, Representative Karl Van Roy’s advocacy helped persuade state law to require retail establishments to grant access of a public restroom or employee bathroom to people affected with bowel disorders; however his authorization of the bill was significantly influenced by Ally Bain.

Since September 2005, “Ally’s Law” became a direct result of an inspiring story based on the Illinois teenager and fellow Crohn’s sufferer. While shopping at a national retail clothing store with her mother, Ally had an urgency to use the restroom, but was refused permission when asking to use the employee only bathroom. Consequently, she suffered a humiliating accident while in the store and because of this, Ally and her mother vowed to prevent similar situations from occurring in the lives of people with IBD diseases.

Supported by the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America and the Foundation for Clinical Research in Inflammatory Bowel Disease, the Restroom Access legislation is designated to those based on the following criteria: (1) has written consent from a physician indicating that he or she has an eligible medical condition (2) uses an ostomy device (3) possesses an identification card that is approved by the Department of Health Services (4) requests usage of the toilet facility during normal business hours and while at least three employees are present. (For further details, please visit ccfa.org or IFFGD.org.)

Although individuals who suffer from IBD do not demand handicap parking spaces or Braille markings, the act is still categorized under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Such diseases qualify for discriminatory protection merely because their symptoms include a sense of urgency. Subsequently, it is with great hope that the Restroom Access Act serves as a positive influence among the thousands of Wisconsin residents living with IBD and their families.