Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

When A Disease Progresses

Shari C. - Dayton, Ohio

That's Medicaid *shares stories of people covered by Medicaid at critical points in their lives, underscoring the importance of stable health insurance coverage in building a Culture of Health.*

Shari was born with cerebral palsy, a movement disorder that has gradually made it harder for her to walk, write, and do other tasks that require fine-motor movements.

Growing up in Ohio with the support of her parents and five siblings, Shari wasn't deterred by the challenges of living with cerebral palsy during childhood. When she found it difficult to write notes in class, Shari began using a tape recorder and replayed lectures to memorize the content. She went on to graduate college with a degree in disability studies and was hired by her local Goodwill as a paper shredder before being quickly promoted to the public relations department.

When Shari turned 32 she began to need more day-to-day assistance, including using a wheel-chair. Shari had always been supported by her mother and a local disability assistance group, but as her condition progressed and her mother aged, she knew she needed more assistance and turned to Medicaid. Medicaid has enabled Shari to keep her job and independence with the daily help of a home visiting assistant. She also serves on several state and national advocacy and executive boards, working to improve supports for people with disabilities.

"You may not have a disability right now—but keep living and you may have one, too. Mine just happened to come earlier than most," Shari said. "Medicaid lets me keep working to improve life for people with disabilities."