



May 20, 2019

Re: Dr. Corinne Basch

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter to implore you to allow Dr. Corinne Basch to stay in this community and continue to serve her patients, most of whom need her desperately. We are an extremely rural community and have a hard time keeping doctors as it is and losing one of the very best would be devastating to our community and have a chilling effect on the health and welfare of countless people. There is nowhere for most of us to turn. I've called around and cannot find anywhere nearby that is accepting new patients.

I have been a patient of Dr. Basch for nearly fifteen years, starting in the early 2000s to 2008 (when she left the area), and continuing when she came back in 2013. By the time I met Dr. Basch, I had seen a multitude of doctors, too many in number and specialty to count, had gone from an active, happy, hardworking, young woman, excited to have just bought her first home, to a deathly ill, bedridden, sick person with no life outside the house and very little hope for a better future. I had overwhelming fatigue and weakness complicated by chronic, debilitating pain. This all came on after a six-month treatment of Lupron for endometriosis. I'd been told I needed psychiatric help and felt absolutely helpless and hopeless after being left undiagnosed after nearly two years.

To say I met Dr. Basch with reticence and trepidation would be an understatement. To my (and my husband's) surprise, she came into the room, sat down with my thick file on her lap, and said, "Let's figure out what's going on." Other doctors had put me on 90 mg of Oxycontin and 60 to 80mg of Norco, which helped with the pain, but I remained undiagnosed and debilitated. Dr. Basch told me of a new program she was implementing that involved meeting with other patients once a month and learning new and different modalities of dealing with chronic pain. I am so thankful I said yes!

Dr. Basch worked with me and my husband tirelessly, ordering myriad blood work, MRI's, scans, and so much more. I cannot now recall all that she looked for but I know it was the most thorough workup I'd had in my life. One thing I knew for sure was that she had STUDIED my history and had every intention and belief that I could recover and find life again. She listened with patience and empathy. I joined the healing group she had started with other people in similar situations as mine. She said she suspected I had fibromyalgia and CFS, two fairly unrecognized problems at that time, even dubious according to many doctors. I had one tell me he wouldn't diagnose patients with those diseases because they were, "Dead-end diagnoses without hope for recovery." Dr. Basch, however, had been studying these diseases and had learned some hopeful research on them. She began teaching me ways of healing that I had never even heard of before. She encouraged me during the pain groups that met once a month for two hours (she was always there the whole time), to try many different approaches: Tai Chi, Chi Gong, meditation, exercise (which seemed impossible at the time), and far too many more to list. She said instead of just taking the pain meds when I felt awful, which was always, to utilize them as another tool in my box of healing. At her gentle urging and because of her absolute confidence it would help, I began slowly exercising, walking just a little each

day. Much to my surprise I started noticing positive changes, not only in my weight, but in my sense of physical and mental well-being. The short, and ultimate, of it is that I started working out daily, eventually going 6-10k on my Nordic Track, started feeling more like my old self, miraculously returned to work a couple of days a week, and was feeling better than I had in years. As I started feeling better and getting stronger, she encouraged me to try slowly tapering down on my pain meds, which I found I was able to do, eventually completely cutting out the Oxycontin! I give credit to her guidance and teaching.

In 2008, Dr. Basch left the area to teach in another state. It was a tremendous loss, but only one of many to come in my life. In her absence, I lost my father and young brother within five months of each other, suffered a new physical setback, which I later learned was spondyloarthritis (gut-related). I was again devastated and lost. This is not a great area for keeping or finding doctors and specialists; it is very rural, all of our doctors are truly overworked and underpaid, and we are constantly losing them to bigger, more populous areas. For care from specialists we must travel long distances and stay in hotels. It is exhausting, expensive, and dehumanizing. I was given Enbrel and was back to needing 60 - 80mg of Norco a day.

In 2013, to my sheer delight, Dr. Basch came back to our area and I jumped at the chance to once again become her patient and join a healing group again. There is nowhere that I know of (certainly nowhere in our area) where once a month you are in a room for two and a half hours WITH your doctor and seven to nine other patients. She knows our cases and us so well. I've never had such amazing, individualized care from a doctor and doubt I will again if she is forced to leave.

Over the last several years I have dealt with setback after setback in my health and Dr. Basch has been working tirelessly by my side to help me figure out what is going on. Under her care and guidance I have been able to reduce my use of Norco from 60-80mg a day, to 10mg a day with an additional 5mg for breakthrough pain. I wouldn't have thought I could do it because I feared getting worse and losing what little life I was able to live. Dr. Basch assured me that while I might feel pretty awful for a while, I would eventually begin to feel better. She was right, but it wasn't easy. I can attest to many others in my group, people with whom I've grown close, who have had similar experiences coming to Dr. Basch on meds that were eventually reduced thanks to her teachings. She is diligent, thorough, and dedicated to helping her patients.

I was diagnosed with stricturing Crohn's with the help of referrals and tests from Dr. Basch. Most recently I have been diagnosed with Ramsay Hunt syndrome, or shingles on the eardrum affecting the facial nerve. It is horrible and terrifying. Dr. Basch is the one who gave me that diagnosis after two other physicians missed it. She made time for me to come in on her day off to be seen because I was having some scary symptoms. She quickly put me on a third round of anti-virals and prednisone in the hopes of saving me from the facial paralysis that can come with this diagnosis. So far it has not progressed.

All of this comes down to how ridiculously wrong it is for an exemplary doctor to have to fight to maintain her professional integrity. She takes on the toughest cases in chronic pain and "legacy patients," who, as I did, come to her on high doses of pain meds. Her groups and her consistent message that there are MANY alternative answers to recovering from or improving debilitating pain other than just throwing a bunch of pills at it prove she truly cares about our quality of life and wants to help us to be as pain-free and medication-free as is humanly possible. She even started a program to help in the treatment of addiction. Sadly, not all can have even a glimpse of quality in their lives, they are so sick; Dr. Basch does not turn her back on those patients. She is exceptional in her care and service, not only to her patients, but to this community as well. Given the depressed economy in our area, it is hard to keep doctors at

all, let alone good doctors. Most of us have to travel out of the area for specialists, which is not only a hardship physically, but financially as well. I fear what the loss of yet another doctor will do to this area, which is already in desperate need of more doctors. I'm afraid for patients who will be left without a doctor. I am afraid for myself. There is literally nowhere for us to go.

I implore you to allow Dr. Basch to continue on with the good she is doing in this community and the help she is giving otherwise hopeless patients, like myself. She has helped me change my life for the better, has given me hope where I had none, has given me a better outlook with a broader spectrum of pain management tools than I'd have ever been able to find on my own, and helped me maintain autonomy in my personal life. She is an exceptional doctor and has made an unparalleled difference in our community. To not allow her to continue on in her work would be detrimental to so many people who desperately need her. I would go so far as to call it unconscionable. Don't take her five most difficult patients as the only representation of who she is as a doctor without taking into consideration the vast number of successful outcomes, which more than overwhelm those five. Do not take punitive action against her, ultimately harming her patients and an entire community that is already riddled with a lack of adequate care and in desperate need of physicians, and keeping in mind the absolute lack of available doctors to take on her patients in this area.

Respectfully,

