



MEET CHLOE

Hello, my name is Chloe and I live in Bakersfield, California. When I turned 8 months old, my mother noticed I had blood in my diaper and took me to the hospital. I started to have seizures and my blood pressure was on the rise so the doctors recommended I transfer to the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in Palo Alto, California. The ambulance ride was my first and unfortunately would not be my last.

Doctors at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital diagnosed that I had Atypical Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome. aHUS is an extremely rare disease characterized by hemolytic anemia, low platelet count and acute renal failure. There are two major concerns: 1) my mother needs to constantly monitor my blood pressure and 2) this disease attacks my kidneys. To prevent my kidneys from failing I need to have plasmapheresis (a blood filtering process) three times per week. Lucile Packard Children's Hospital is the only hospital in Northern California that can conduct this procedure on a small child. My mother and I get up at 4am on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday so can make the 4-hour drive to Palo Alto. The plasmapheresis can take between 3-5 hours to complete and then we drive back home so we can be with the family.

I am very lucky because my parents are extremely loving. Before I became ill, my mother was enrolled in a nursing program in Bakersfield but had to drop out to take care of me. She is able to communicate with the doctors and has developed a great relationship with the nurses. My father is in the construction business and has been providing for us for the past few months. It has been hard on him because of the frequent travels to Palo Alto.

Since my diagnosis, I have been rushed to the emergency room and admitted to the hospital several times. My parents need to monitor my diet and make sure my blood pressure stays level. The medical expenses, regularly scheduled trips and the additional costs have put a large financial burden on my family. Just the travel costs from Bakersfield to Palo Alto have added several hundred dollars to my parent's monthly expenses.

Every day I pray for miracle that the doctors find a cure.