

CHRIS CHRISTIE'S DEATH PANELS FOR "EXCEPTIONS"

Seven years ago October 16, at the age of 34, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. After six rounds of pretty harsh chemo, surgery, radiation, and five years of hormonal treatments, I am still clean of cancer.

I'm almost getting to the point where I believe I won't have a recurrence. As I prepare to move my mother into her new retirement home, I'm beginning to believe I might outlive her.

Except.

Except for the fact that twelve years ago, when I was 29, my breast cancer was misdiagnosed. I had a palpable lump that my primary care physician agreed merited concern. But when I went to the referral doctor, he refused to send me for a mammogram. He refused to send me for an ultrasound. He refused to send me to aspirate what he assumed was "just a cyst."

That doctor, like NJ GOP Gubernatorial candidate Chris Christie, believed that women in their twenties just don't get breast cancer. Or rather, those 5% of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer at a young age—like both Jane (diagnosed at 32) and me—are "exceptions." Exceptions for whom we should not require insurance companies to offer diagnostic tests like mammograms. Never mind that my insurance company would have had to spend far less than the \$75,000 it eventually spent to treat my cancer if we had treated the lump when I first discovered it. Never mind any costs to treat the heart disease that chemo might eventually give me. Never mind the costs if—god forbid—cancer left untreated for five years shows up in the future in a vital organ or something.

Chris Christie thinks it's smart to end the

requirements on NJ insurance companies that they cover things like mammograms for the "exceptions" like me and Jane. He's a walking death panel for "exceptions" like me and Jane.

And that's what those of you from NJ can look forward to if he wins the gubernatorial election this November.