



Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

in Support of LD 1793
An Act to Ensure Access to and Coverage of Low Cost Insulin
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

February 13, 2024

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Troy Jackson. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and have the great honor of representing Aroostook County in the Legislature. I am here today to introduce an amended version of LD 1793, "An Act to Ensure Access to and Coverage of Low Cost Insulin."

The outrageous cost of prescription drugs in this state and in this country is nothing new. As state lawmakers, every single one of us has heard heartbreaking stories from constituents about how the high price of lifesaving medication has put folks in the difficult position about choosing between heating their homes and their health. It's not right and it doesn't have to be this way. Insulin exemplifies these issues. How can a century-old-drug whose patent sold for less than a \$1 be out-of-reach for thousands of Maine patients? The answer seems to be greed.

This proposal seeks to build on our efforts to rein in costs and improve access and affordability to insulin and other medication. It would allow Mainers to benefit from any low cost insulin manufacturer who wants to sell their products in our state. This amendment would require that insurers cover the lowest cost insulin, determined by its wholesale acquisition cost, with no cost sharing requirement for the patient. It would also waive the insulin registration fee for non-profit manufacturers, like CivicaRx, to incentivize the sale of low-cost insulin to Mainers.

We've done a lot of good work here to make sure that every Mainer who needs insulin can get it. Our safety net program makes it so that folks facing a financial crisis don't have to ration their medication to get through a difficult month. But there's still more we can do to make it accessible to everyone all the time, not just in the moment someone is experiencing a crisis. By bringing low cost insulin to our state and requiring insurers cover it with no cost-sharing requirement, we will bring the affordability of our safety net program to all Mainers. Hopefully once we bring low cost insulin into our state market, we will see competition from the big for-

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profit pharmaceutical companies that have been bleeding people dry by charging them through the nose for their medically necessary medications.

More than a quarter of Mainers have cut pills in half, skipped doses or delayed or declined refilling a prescription because of cost, according to a survey by Consumers for Affordable Health Care.¹ I know that large pharmaceutical companies will argue that they've capped prices and offered promotional programs to lower the cost of insulin. Let's be clear – though coupons and gimmicks may provide temporary relief, laws like this will have a lasting effect.

This bill may be one small step toward tackling the huge issue of rising medical costs in our country, but I believe it is an important step. Nobody should face the choice between paying rent, buying groceries, keeping their lights on and paying for a medication that they need to live.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I urge you to support LD 1793 as amended. I would be happy to answer any questions.

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/14-Ywr3GM8FdKP5qa9U3Kp6Q3EdlclG_4/view