



Cathy Breen  
Senator, District 25

**THE MAINE SENATE**

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony introducing  
LD 673, An Act To Create the Insulin Safety Net Program  
Senator Cathy Breen  
April 13, 2021**

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Cathy Breen. I represent Maine Senate District 25, which includes the communities of Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gray, Long Island, Yarmouth, and about half of the City of Westbrook. I am here to introduce **LD 673, An Act To Create the Insulin Safety Net Program**.

Too many people with Type 1 diabetes are struggling with the high cost of insulin, a situation only made worse since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This leads to having to make very difficult financial choices and, in many cases, patients taking less than they need in order to make their supply last longer.

It was this rationing of doses that led to the tragedy that inspired this bill. Minnesota now provides an emergency supply of insulin to people who can't afford it, a measure that resulted from an uninsured young man stretching his supply too thin and dying because of it. That bill garnered widespread support and serves as the model for LD 673. You will hear more about Alec Smith in subsequent testimony.

This bill, like the one in Minnesota, will create the Insulin Safety Net Program, so that Mainers with diabetes who either don't have health insurance, a prescription or cannot afford the cost of their insulin would be able to get an emergency 30-day supply of insulin at their pharmacy for \$35 no questions asked. This bill represents a lifeline to many of the more than 100,000 Mainers with Type 1 diabetes, especially those who don't have health insurance or even state-regulated health care plans.

The program works like this: A patient will have to complete a form attesting that they are a resident of Maine, they are not enrolled in MaineCare or other insurance that covers insulin for \$75 or less out of pocket, that they are in urgent need of insulin and that they have not received a supply of insulin through this program in the previous year.

The patient will then bring the form to a pharmacy, along with a valid insulin prescription and a Maine state ID, driver's license, or permit. The pharmacist will provide the patient with a 30-day supply of insulin for a co-pay of no more than \$35. The pharmacist will also provide the patient with a sheet on prescription discount programs, how to apply for MaineCare, how to find an insurance policy on the Affordable Care Act marketplace, and other helpful information.

After serving the patient, the pharmacy will submit a request to the insulin manufacturer to either reimburse them for the remaining cost of the insulin after the patient's co-pay or provide the pharmacy with a replacement supply of the same insulin at no cost to the pharmacy.

We all know that people make impossible choices every day with respect to budgeting for medication, and this can be especially dangerous when it comes to insulin. Last year, the Legislature passed a measure to cap the out-of-pocket cost of insulin for patients relying on state-regulated plans. While this bill was an excellent start, it only affected those with health insurance. LD 673 will go one step further to give Mainers with Type 1 diabetes peace of mind that comes with knowing they will not run out of life-saving medication, whether or not they are insured. Please support this bill. I am happy to answer any questions.