

April 10, 2021

To the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Michelle Dehetre and I live in Lewiston. I was diagnosed with Type I Diabetes in 1985 as a freshman in high school. I am 50 years old. I am a mother of five. My dream is to see my 13 year old son graduate high school.

Since my testimony 2 years ago, I took out a \$2,500 loan in May 2019 to cover my insurance deductible to be able to start using a continuous glucose monitor and an insulin pump. Because of meeting my deductible the cost to continue that care was affordable for the rest of the year. At the end of the year I resorted to not using the pump as recommended filling the pump reservoirs as full as I can and not changing the site every three days as recommended. I've only had one close call requiring a hospital visit since starting the continuous glucose monitor.

Ending up in the ER always scares me, not only because I know it's a close call, but because on top of my medicine, I cannot afford another medical bill. When the paramedic visit results in a ride to the hospital, it costs \$600 and the hospital cost is usually about \$2,000.

Having started to use the pump as not recommended had extended the 4 months of supplies I have to more than a year of use. As soon as I run out of my pump supplies I will be going back to shots as I can't afford the pump supplies. My insurance company now requires the full deductible is met (nearly \$6,000) before they will start to cover the supplies. I spend \$83 a month for my glucose sensors and an additional \$69 every third month for a new transmitter. Not to mention what I spend for insulin, glucose tablets, orange juice, etc. that are all used to aid in my diabetes care.

The money I am spending on diabetes treatment already is too much. In addition to buying food, paying the electric bill, and other monthly bills for my household, spending what I have to per month for my diabetes care is a major financial strain. I cut back on spending whenever I can. I am always looking for ways to save money on food and gas, and sometimes fall short at the end of the month. Treating my diabetes is a matter of life and death. When my body doesn't get the insulin it needs, it makes my blood sugars go very high, which over time can lead to diabetic complications, such as blindness, neuropathy, and even death.

Sadly, I actually know that I am better off than others. In the year 2021, I wonder how many others are also struggling to cover the cost of insulin, and other diabetes medicines and supplies. How many others are trying to save costs by using old insulin to no avail? In 2021, no one should have to go through this. I want insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies to wake up. What they think they are doing to save money is not helping people like me. But you can. Please pass the package of prescription drug bills that you are considering today.

Thank you,

Michelle Dehetre
Lewiston, Maine