



Connected **for Life**

April 12, 2021

Dear Chair Sanborn, Chair Tepler and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

I am writing on behalf of the American Diabetes Association (ADA) to ask for your support for **LD 673**, which is being heard by your committee on April 13th. This bill, modeled after a Minnesota law, would establish an **insulin safety net program** for people with diabetes who require insulin.

Maine, like the rest of the country, has experienced a diabetes epidemic. Approximately 114,000 adults in Maine have diagnosed diabetes, or more than 1 in 10. And every year another 7,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes. Many people with diabetes need insulin to live, and to avoid devastating complication that can result in blindness, kidney failure, lower limb amputation, heart attack, stroke and possibly death.

But too often, people with diabetes are struggling to afford the insulin their doctor has prescribed. The average price of insulin has skyrocketed in recent years, with some insulins tripling in price over a decade. Surveys have indicated that 1 in 4 people are rationing their insulin. This means they are skipping doses or are taking less insulin than they need to appropriately manage their diabetes. This threatens their health and their life.

LD 673 would establish two avenues of assistance for qualifying Maine residents:

1. **Urgent Need Program**: A 30-day supply of insulin would be provided to a person with an urgent need of insulin (having less than a 7-day supply on hand). Manufacturers would provide the insulin at no cost. The individual could be charged up to \$35 to cover the pharmacy's costs.
2. **Continued Need Program**: The second avenue would provide insulin for an ongoing need throughout the year. Under this initiative, manufacturers would provide a 90-day supply of insulin at no charge. The individual could be charged up to \$50 to account for the pharmacy's costs. Alternatively, for those with prescription drug coverage, the manufacturer could provide cost sharing assistance so the individual's insulin cost did not exceed \$35 per 30-day supply.

On behalf of people with diabetes, ADA urges you to support LD 673. With affordable insulin, people with diabetes are better positioned to manage their glucose levels to stay healthy and productive, out of the ER and the hospital, and away from expensive and potentially disabling or deadly complications. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen Habbe'.

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