

Senate Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee Hearing
Making Health Care Work for Maine Bill Package (LD 675, 1071, 673, 686, 120)
April 13, 2021

Madam Chair, members of the committee, thank you for having me here to share my story today.

My name is Miriam Wolfe and I'm from York, Maine. I have been retired for five years and love to spend my time going for walks in the woods and performing upkeep on my parents' old home.

But in 2019, I developed constant and severe anal pain that has made it nearly impossible for me to stay active and enjoy my retirement. To help control my pain, the doctor prescribed me analgesic suppositories. But when I got to the pharmacy counter, I was shocked to learn that using just two suppositories a day would cost about \$540 for a month's supply. I only receive \$840 per month from Social Security — there was no way I could afford the prescription, so I left it at the counter. It seemed utterly ridiculous that a medication would cost nearly two-thirds of my monthly income.

This year, I finally received an explanation for my worsening symptoms: Crohn's disease. To manage the condition, my doctors suggest that I begin Remicade infusions, which are priced at about \$3,500 per month. I don't know how I'm going to pay these bills, but I have no other choice. While I figure things out, I am going without these medications. I avoid leaving my house because I worry about not having quick access to a restroom, and when I have to go somewhere, I don't eat beforehand to eliminate the risk of having an accident.

I was a psychiatric nurse before I retired, and I've seen the prices of drugs — both mine and my patients' — rise over the years. We need relief. That's why I am asking you to vote in support of LD 686 to expand on previous efforts to increase transparency around drug pricing tactics. The entire package of bills, including LD 675, 1071, 673, and 120, is pivotal to curb drug prices and hold Big Pharma accountable so that patients like me can afford the drugs we desperately need.

Thank you for your time.