

Marie Caldwell
Maine Medical Partners Endocrinology and Diabetes
LD 1729

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee: I am Marie Caldwell, an endocrinologist at Maine Medical Partners and I am here to testify in support of LD 1729.

As an adult endocrinologist I see patients with diabetes every single day. As you know the price of insulin is exorbitant. Many of my patients have to ration their insulin or go without until their next paycheck or social security payment. I have a patient whose diabetes is uncontrolled because we cannot increase her insulin any further as she already has to choose whether to pay for food or insulin. Many of my patients who have health insurance often have a copay of \$200-300 a month for their insulin. I also see uninsured young patients with type 1 diabetes who buy long acting insulin from Walmart because it is the cheapest, even though this type of insulin increases their risk of life threatening low blood sugar. Unfortunately, I have seen too many patients in my six years of being an endocrinologist who lose limbs, go on dialysis, and become blind because they are unable to afford their insulin. Every single day our medical system prioritizes profit over the wellbeing of patients. When Frederick Banting discovered insulin in 1923 he said "Insulin does not belong to me, it belongs to the world" and sold the patent for one dollar (1). Nearly 100 years later the price of insulin for my patients is outrageous. We need to take better care of our Mainers and improve their access to insulin. Thank you for your time.

(1) <https://bantinghouseshs.ca/2018/12/14/insulin-patent-sold-for-1/>; accessed 1/30/22