



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLY CHEESEMAN
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RANKING MEMBER
GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

July 21, 2020 * 10:00am * Zoom

Testimony *in Support* of LCO #3601 AN ACT CONCERNING DIABETES AND HIGH DEDUCTIBLE HEALTH PLANS.

Dear Chairmen Lesser and Scanlon, Ranking Members Kelly and Pavalock-D'Amato, and distinguished members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

I appreciate having the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LCO #3601 on your hearing agenda today. I am especially pleased that the importance of this bill was recognized and it is being included on the agenda for the special session. This bill takes a vital step toward addressing the ever-escalating costs of insulin and the supplies necessary to treat and control diabetes. It has been almost one hundred years since the discovery of insulin by Sir Frederick Banting. That discovery gave diabetes sufferers the chance to live longer, healthier, more productive lives. In 1982 Humulin, the first genetically engineered, biosynthetic insulin was put on the market by the drug manufacturer Eli Lilly.

Diabetics rely on insulin and the associated testing supplies to maintain the normal blood sugar levels required for a healthy life. Without good blood glucose control those with diabetes are fated to suffer a host of terrible complications – blindness, kidney failure, amputations, and heart disease. I have personal knowledge of the terrible toll exacted by Type 1 diabetes, as I watched my late husband struggle with maintaining good blood sugar control while battling his disease. At the time of his death, he had suffered diabetic retinopathy, undergoing numerous laser treatments and vitrectomies in both eyes. Despite this, he was losing his vision. He had severe neuropathy in both feet and was in end stage renal failure and was on the kidney transplant list at Hartford Hospital.

That is why access to insulin and supplies is so vital and why the astronomical price increases that have occurred are so harmful and indeed, egregious. According to a report by the non-profit Health Care Cost Institute, the annual cost of insulin and insulin products doubled between 2012 and 2016 (<https://healthcostinstitute.org/diabetes-and-insulin/spending-on-individuals-with-type-1-diabetes-and-the-role-of-rapidly-increasing-insulin-prices>).

This is not due to amazing improvements or changes in drug formulation or that patients are paying twice as much but using half the amount of insulin to achieve the desired results. In the last decade, the

list prices of the most common forms of insulin have nearly tripled, even though the formulation has stayed the same. According to a study by T1 International, last year more than a quarter of Type 1 diabetes sufferers rationed their insulin use due to cost.

(https://www.t1international.com/media/assets/file/T1International_Report_-_Costs_and_Rationing_of_Insulin_Diabetes_Supplies_2.pdf)

This is wrong. By their pricing practices, drug manufacturers are sentencing thousands to avoidable complications and premature death. Connecticut can lead the country in ensuring that those with diabetes have access to the drug that keeps them alive at a cost they can afford. By mandating affordable access to insulin, this legislature can preserve the health of thousands of residents in this state, along with their eyes, kidneys, limbs, and hearts.

I respectfully urge you to support LCO #3601. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Holly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Holly Cheeseman
State Representative, 37th District
East Lyme, Niantic, Salem