

Dear Senator Lesser and Representative Scanlon and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

My name is Tim Gabriele and I am a resident of North Haven, Connecticut. I am writing in support of passing the legislation as introduced in SB-1, An Act Concerning Diabetes and High Deductible Health Plans. My understanding is that some version of this bill be considered in the special session. I would urge you to pass it in its entirety.

As I'm sure you know, the COVID-19 crisis has already exacerbated existing inequities in healthcare, particularly as joblessness has skyrocketed and so many families are placed in the unfortunate situation of prioritizing things like rent, groceries, other bills, or medicine. Families with diabetes have been among the most affected and they have been being gouged by the healthcare industry as prices on insulin have shot up over 1000% since the 1990s. Already an immunocompromised population that is more susceptible to COVID-19 than the general population, diabetics across Connecticut, disproportionately represented in minority and working class communities, and across the country have been unable to afford medication, access refills, or even be diagnosed because of the constraints put on them by economic duress, unemployment, or public health restrictions.

I am a non-insulin dependent Type 2 diabetic myself and I am lucky enough to both have control over my disease because I am a member of a strong union that has fought to make sure my employer caps the price on medications. However, I have lost people in my family to this affliction and currently have friends across the country who are rationing their insulin and thereby taking chances with their lives because of the unreasonable costs of their medication. One peer, 40 years old and one of the millions laid off during the pandemic, is a single parent with four young boys who has been diabetic her entire life and is now rationing to make sure she can put food on their table first. I want to extend the privileges I already enjoy to every person in Connecticut.

I hope the committee and Connecticut lawmakers agree that this is an urgent priority that deserves a vote in the special session. I support its passage with the acknowledgement that it should be a stopgap on the way to comprehensive single-payer universal coverage that is free at the point of service and provides full pharmaceutical care from birth to death.

Thank you for your time,  
Timothy Gabriele  
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