

March 1, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo:

Thank you for the opportunity to share proponent testimony on HB 37.

My name is Sharon Rickey. My daughter was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes eleven years ago at the age of 16. We have lived with the never-ending challenges of managing this disease since that diagnosis. An important fact to remember about Type 1 Diabetes is that there is never “recovery” from this disease. My daughter will have to deal with the management of this disease every hour of every day for the rest of her life.

I am sure you are aware of the background for the request of this bill. A diabetic and their caregiver must constantly be on alert for the care and management of all facets of the medical items needed to properly manage this disease. Where insulin is concerned there are several reasons someone may need an emergency refill, including a broken glass vial, insulin that was left in the heat (during power outages, for example), a bad vial (yes, this happens), needing more insulin than usual due to illness or stress, insulin forgotten at home or in a hotel room (as it is often kept in the refrigerator) and equipment failures that lead to losing the insulin in the reservoir of an insulin pump. We have had some close calls with almost running out of insulin and I was willing to pay \$300 for a single vial of insulin so my child could live.

It is necessary for insurance to cover this because of the outrageous cost of insulin. Since 2009, the cost of insulin has gone from \$40 a vial to around \$300 a vial with no change in the product. Research indicates that as much as 70% of the cost of insulin is made up of pharmacy benefit manager rebates. Please know that “Walmart” insulin is not the answer...it is an older version of insulin that that was once the best option but has not been for nearly 20 years. Many people do not know how to accurately dose it.

I urge you to pass HB 37 to make it easier for a Type 1 Diabetic to obtain insulin in emergency situations.

Sincerely,  
Sharon Rickey, MS, RDN, LD  
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