



Connected **for Life**

January 11, 2023

Dear Chairman Lee and Committee Members,

On behalf of the American Diabetes Association (ADA) please accept my thanks for hearing Senate Bill 2140 (SB 2140) to limit out-of-pocket monthly spending on insulin.

Diabetes is an epidemic in the United States and the cost of managing it can be unsustainable. There are 54,372 people in North Dakota who have been diagnosed with diabetes, or 9.1% of the adult population. People with diabetes have medical expenses approximately 2.3 times higher than those who do not. In North Dakota, the total direct medical expense for diagnosed diabetes was estimated to be \$471 million in 2017 and an additional \$109 million was spent on indirect costs from lost productivity.¹ When people with diabetes are unable to manage the disease and access the insulin they need it increases the risk of developing additional costly and burdensome complications including heart disease, kidney failure, and amputations.

As it stands, 22 states and the District of Columbia have passed laws to limit out-of-pocket monthly spending for insulin and as of January 1, 2023, all Medicare beneficiaries will have their out-of-pocket monthly spending for insulin capped at \$35. Between 2002 and 2013 the cost of insulin nearly tripled². When people cannot afford the medication necessary to manage their diabetes, they scale back or forego the care they need to manage their health or are forced to choose between paying for their medication or rent, utilities, and other necessities.

In 2019, BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota announced that they would offer insulin to members with a \$0 co-pay.³ Following Colorado's legislation, the Colorado Sun reviewed documents from the 21 health plans and found that limiting out-of-pocket monthly spending on insulin either did not impact premiums or if they did, it was described as negligible.⁴ Similar studies and fiscal analysis conducted in other states had similar findings. This legislation offers a solution to ensure that people with diabetes can afford the medication they need to live. I respectfully ask that you support SB 2140.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at ckemp@diabetes.org.

Sincerely,

Carissa Kemp
Director of State Government Affairs and Advocacy
American Diabetes Association

¹ https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/ADV_2021_State_Fact_sheets_all_rev_1.27_ND.pdf

² American Diabetes Association, https://diabetes.org/advocacy/insulin-and-drug-affordability?utm_source=diabetes-care-cost&utm_medium=website&utm_content=learn-more-1-btn&utm_campaign=ADV&s_src=online&s_subsrc=insulin-drug-affordability

³ BlueCross and BlueShield of Minnesota to Cover Insulin Costs as No Charge Next Year, <https://www.bluecrossmn.com/about-us/newsroom/news-releases/blue-cross-and-blue-shield-minnesota-cover-insulin-costs-no-charge>

⁴ Ingold, John, Critics worried Colorado's new law capping insulin costs would raise insurance rates. It hasn't. <https://coloradosun.com/2019/09/11/colorado-insulin-price-insurance/>