

Honorable North Dakota Senators,

I am writing to you in support of Senate Bill 2140 regarding Insulin and Supplies Copay Capping Bill in North Dakota. Senators, please for a minute, imagine you are a seven year old boy. You are sitting in your classroom and you peer over to the door and you see your mother standing there. She appears frantic. She tells you that we need to get to the hospital right away. This morning, your mother had tested your blood sugar while you were sleeping (fasting) and it was 268 mg/dL. Please keep in mind that a normal blood sugar is less than 100 mg/dL. You spend the next couple hours getting poked and prodded. Crying, sobbing, begging to go home. The doctor finally tells you that you have Type 1 Diabetes. Type 1 Diabetes is an autoimmune disease that is triggered by environmental factors without a cure. You are scared. At seven years old, you do not fully understand what this means. You meet with the diabetes educator thinking that you are on your way home after your mother learns how to give you multiple daily injections of insulin. The doctor comes in and tells you that they found ketones (glucose) in your urine and that you need to go to the hospital. At this point, you're dehydrated and the nurses spend several hours trying to put in an IV to deliver fluids. Seven years old. My son was seven years old when this happened to him on March 10, 2022. My son never asked for this and there is nothing he could've done to prevent this disease. Imagine if this was your child or your grandchild. Living everyday only because of a hormone that is produced by a pharmacy because your pancreas no longer produces it.

This is what I have learned from the last year as a caretaker of someone with this disease. Prior to 1921, people with Type 1 Diabetes did not live long because there was not much that doctors could do for them, dying within days or months. In 1921, insulin was successfully isolated by Frederick Banting and his medical student Charles Best. Within a year, people with Type 1 Diabetes were being treated with insulin for a disease that had been previously considered fatal. According to the American Diabetes Association, over 1.9 million Americans live with the disease, making insulin a medical miracle for many. In 1923, Banting, Colip and Best were awarded U.S. patents on insulin and the method used to make it. They sold these patents to the University of Toronto for \$1 each. That's worth repeating. They sold these patents to the University of Toronto for \$1 each! According to Advanced Science News, Banting famously said "Insulin does not belong to me, it belongs to the world." He wanted everyone to have access to it.

Fast forward to today, where the pharmaceutical industry is price gouging millions of patients for a medication that costs from \$2-\$6 to produce. This greed is keeping insulin out of the hands of those who need it to survive. Many Type 1 Diabetics are living with the daily anxiety that they need to ration their insulin, go without it at times or that they won't be able to afford it. A study in the Annals of Internal Medicine found that in 2021, 1 in 5 Americans were rationing their insulin. This means that they sacrifice paying bills and buying groceries to afford insulin. What we are seeing is the manipulation of the population to make a profit. The intent of Mr. Banting's discovery was to save lives and yet people can not afford a product made for that sole purpose. Type 1 Diabetics should not have to compromise their health due to affordability and inequality.

We are urging you to vote yes and join the other 23 states that have capped the price of insulin and basic supplies to sustain life and delay complications by providing access and affordability to everyone for this minimum standard of care.

I will leave you with one last thing I've learned. Did you know that people living with Type 1 Diabetes make over 180 decisions every day regarding how to manage the disease in addition to everyday life decisions. How about we take away one of them - making the decision on whether or not they can afford to buy insulin to stay alive? The price of voting no on a cap for insulin, could be paid in human lives. So, I ask you, how would you vote if your child or grandchild was living with Type 1 Diabetes and there was a possibility they could not afford the drug they need to stay alive? Please vote yes on Senate Bill 2140. Thank you for your support of this request.

Gwen Sobolik
(Mother of Trygg Sobolik, Type 1 Diabetic)
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References:

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