

To: Chairman Dever, Randy Burckhard, Kyle Davison, Curt Kreun, & Tim Mathern

From: Katie Paulson, caregiver of child with diabetes

Re: SB 2140

Chairman Dever and committee members,

Please consider supporting SB 2140 as it will provide reasonable access and payment for the lifesaving drugs and supplies that diabetic people in our state depend upon to live.

In February of 2022, after what we thought was a long version of the stomach flu, my son Lucas age twelve had a life flight from our small town of Watford City to Sanford Medical Center in Bismarck. He was not sick with the flu, but we learned that he now was considered a Type 1 Diabetic and he was in severe Diabetic Ketoacidosis. It was a terrifying ordeal, but I am no stranger to T1D as my dad has been insulin dependent since he was 20 years old. I have lived with a diabetic person most of my life. I was actually a bit relieved that it was a disorder that we could manage as my dad has for over 45 years.

I learned very quickly that being the caregiver for a youth with T1D was completely different than being a child in a house with a diabetic parent. It was my job to balance his insulin and blood glucose levels were working to keep him at a healthy and normal range. I still remember the sticker shock when I picked up my first monthly order of CGM (Continuous Glucose Monitors), one month of insulin, and the other supplies that we needed to take home with us to begin this journey. It was over \$1300 for our family. The insulin itself was over \$600 for both kinds that we were prescribed. I have good health insurance from my job, but there is no prescription plan that offsets the costs for us to keep our supplies. I know that regardless of the price we have to get our supplies.

It would be a great help if you pass SB 2140 for any of our diabetic citizens in North Dakota. I think about diabetic people that struggle financially, and I know some that "ration" their insulin because

of the cost. If diabetic folks do not control their disease and keep their blood glucose level in the range the doctors prescribe it could result in death. It is very dangerous and it also increases the risk for other health conditions that happen to diabetic patients that don't have the means to control their blood glucose levels.

Type 1 Diabetes is an auto-immune disease that happens without cause other than genetics. We learned that Lucas' body was attacking the beta cells in his pancreas. The beta cells are the cells that create insulin in our bodies. Our doctor told us the second day in the ICU that there was nothing that we could have done to stop this from happening to our son. It was coded in his body before he was even born. He certainly didn't ask for this to happen. He and other insulin dependent diabetics have no choice other than to manually give their bodies insulin. There is no other way to control this disease.

From the moment this journey started with my son, I have been plagued with worry. I worry constantly about his blood sugar, I worry about him as he grows and moves toward his own independent life where I won't be the one purchasing his supplies, and I worry that this is a burden that he doesn't deserve. Diabetes is a heavy load in itself, but the financial burden of the disease and ease of access to drugs and tools can be something that is addressed.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2140 to ensure access and affordability of insulin to our diabetic citizens. Give our citizens easy access to a drug that their life depends upon. Thank you for your consideration on this bill.

Sincerely,

Katie Paulson