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Insulin Affordability Act Passes Oregon House of Representatives

House Bill 4073 seeks to make insulin more accessible for Oregonians

SALEM, Ore. – Insulin is a matter of life and death for people with diabetes. For the nearly 300,000 Oregonian adults diagnosed with diabetes, there is no safe substitute medication for insulin, and the average price of this lifesaving medicine has nearly tripled between 2002 and 2013, making it unaffordable for many people who depend on it.

[House Bill 4073](#), the Oregon Insulin Affordability Act, will cap insulin costs at \$75 for a 30-day supply, or \$225 for a 90-day supply. These prices are regardless of the number of vials needed by the patient, making insulin more affordable for many Oregonians who rely on it to stay healthy and working.

Rep. Sheri Schouten (D-Beaverton), a public health nurse and leading proponent of the Oregon Insulin Affordability Act, brought a personal connection to the legislation.

“My mother suffered from Type 1 diabetes. As a kid, she used to send me to the corner pharmacy with a small handful of coins to buy her insulin,” Rep. Schouten said. “Quite simply, insulin was affordable. Sadly, that is no longer the case for far too many of our neighbors. Now, too many people with diabetes are forced to make decisions about their medicine that can have damaging consequences to their health, including rationing doses to reduce costs. This bill is one way we can push back on that trend.”

A vial of insulin cost \$21 in 1996, while the price has jumped to more than \$300 today. Rep. Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville) is a co-sponsor of the measure.

“Having access to health care isn’t the same as having access to affordable health care,” Rep. Neron said. “I have constituents in my district who have to choose between paying for their insulin and putting food on the table. I’m here to fight for them. Oregon can lead the way as the fourth state in the nation to pass this lifesaving legislation to cap the costs of insulin and stand up for people, not pharmaceutical companies.”

Joining Rep. Schouten as a chief sponsor are Sen. James Manning Jr (D-Eugene) and Rep. David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford). A bipartisan group of 26 Representatives and Senators signed on as sponsors.

Illinois, Colorado and New Mexico recently passed similar legislation to protect consumers from skyrocketing insulin costs. The bill, which passed 47 to 8, now advances to the Oregon State Senate.

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