

MaineHealth

MaineHealth Local Health Systems

Franklin Community
Health Network
LincolnHealth
MaineHealth Care At Home
Maine Behavioral Healthcare
Memorial Hospital
Maine Medical Center
Mid Coast-Parkview Health
NorDx
Pen Bay Medical Center
Southern Maine Health Care
Synernet
Waldo County General Hospital
Western Maine Health

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MaineGeneral Health
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Hospital of Portland
St. Mary's Health System

Testimony of Irwin Brodsky, MD, MPH, MaineHealth In Support of LD 673 “An Act to Create the Insulin Safety Net Program” Tuesday, April 13, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Irwin Brodsky, an Endocrinologist at Maine Medical Partners, and I am here to testify in support of LD 673, “An Act To Create the Insulin Safety Net Program.”

MaineHealth is Maine’s largest integrated non-profit health care system that provides a full continuum of health care services to the residents of eleven counties in Maine and one in New Hampshire. As part of our mission of “Working Together So Maine’s Communities are the Healthiest in America,” MaineHealth strongly supports increasing access to affordable – and lifesaving – health care and medications. In fact, MaineHealth has established a policy to provide Free Care to all patients with incomes at or below 200% of the poverty level. Additionally, MaineHealth’s MedAccess program helps patients with limited resources acquire prescription drugs that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

MaineHealth and our providers strongly support ensuring a patient’s access to insulin in an emergency situation – and insulin that is affordable. If I may share an important lesson that I have learned over the thirty-seven years that I have worked at my specialty—a person with diabetes who has a profound deficiency of naturally produced insulin may experience vomiting, coma, and approach death within hours of running out of prescribed insulin.

Patients fear this scenario. Their family and friends fear it. They will skimp on their insulin doses to make their supply last, so they can avoid a medical catastrophe. A person’s insulin requirements are not easily predicted, varying with unanticipated injury, illness, or stress. Running out of insulin is always a possibility, even if patient and doctor estimate carefully.

This legislation, with provision for an emergency insulin supply, maintains an important safeguard that will provide Maine residents with diabetes the assurance that they will not lose access to a life-saving therapy.

Additionally, LD 673 is important for the fact that it requires insulin manufacturers to provide insulin, capped at \$35 for a 30-day supply, to patients who cannot otherwise afford it by virtue of having high-deductible or high-

copay insurance, coverage by a self-funded insurance plan (and thus, not covered by [Public Law, Chapter 666](#)), or no insurance.

While we are supportive of the legislation before you today, I have a few questions that are not clearly answered in the bill. They include the following: Will a caregiver be allowed to receive an emergency supply of insulin for a patient that is homebound? Will assistance be provided and by whom to patients with limited literacy or otherwise limited ability to complete the applications for assistance? In the event that an insulin emergency occurs when pharmacies are closed, would a patient be able to receive an emergency supply elsewhere and could that entity also receive reimbursement and resupply?

The legislation before you today will save lives, prevent severe morbidity, reduce emergency department visits, and reduce hospitalizations. With that said, I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 673. Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.