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Alaska House of Representatives
Representative Liz Snyder



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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 382: INSULIN COVERAGE: INSURANCE; MEDICAID

Nearly 50,000 people in Alaska or 8.8% of the adult population have been diagnosed with diabetes. Every year, an additional 5,000 Alaskan adults are diagnosed. Skyrocketing insulin costs are hampering these Alaskans' access to the treatment they need. Many Alaskans who cannot afford exorbitant and predatory co-pays are finding themselves in crisis. HB 382 seeks to address this by capping the co-pay cost of insulin at \$35. This is an important step in ensuring this vital treatment remains available to Alaskans. Unlike other life-saving drugs, there is no lower cost, generic version of insulin.

In 1996, a vial of insulin was priced at approximately \$20. Today, that price has leapt to \$300 per vial. One in four insulin users have said cost has impacted their insulin use, with some individuals resorting to rationing their insulin. Non-adherence to regular insulin treatment can lead to overall increased medical spending. Research has shown that irregular insulin use can increase inpatient hospital costs by up to 41%. Diabetic foot ulcers inflict people with huge medical bills, even with insurance. Individuals with private health plans find themselves paying up to \$16,883 more for foot ulcer treatments, which left untreated can result in amputation. Individuals with Medicare also feel the burden of this issue. In 2017, complications from end-stage renal disease, which has an increased risk with irregular insulin use, left Medicare with an approximate \$120 billion price tag.

Costs should never prevent an individual from getting insulin. HB 382 will make insulin more affordable for more Alaskans, joining Alaska with 16 other states that have passed insulin price cap legislation. The United States has the highest insulin prices in the world by an already unacceptable margin, and it is a figure that continues to grow. I hope you join me in support of HB 382 so we can ensure that Alaskans don't have to ration their life-sustaining treatment. Alaskans deserve better.

