

Durbin, Colleagues Unveil Bipartisan Bill to Examine Scope of Insulin Affordability Crisis and Brief Americans Relief

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WASHINGTON – In association with World Diabetes Day, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined Senators Tina Smith (D-MN), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), and Roger Wicker (R-MS) in introducing bipartisan legislation to create a national study to more fully understand the scope of the insulin affordability crisis in America and its impacts on rationing and patient health outcomes. One recent study found that one in four Americans with diabetes is rationing their insulin, and some have died as a result.

The bipartisan Insulin Affordability Data Collection Act would direct the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to look into how high insulin prices

make it more difficult for people with diabetes to adhere to their insulin prescriptions, and to calculate the amount of money federal health programs could save if they didn't have to treat Americans who need additional care because they are unable to afford their proper doses.

“As the pharmaceutical industry drives insulin prices through the roof, the millions of Americans with diabetes are suffering because of it. Our bipartisan bill will help us understand how Big Pharma's insulin pricing scandal is impacting patients so we can find more solutions for people struggling to afford this life-saving drug,” Durbin said.

The Insulin Affordability Data Collection Act would require the HHS Secretary through the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) to conduct a study that examines the impact of the affordability of insulin on individuals who are insulin-dependent. Specifically, this study will investigate the impact of the affordability of insulin products on:

Adherence to insulin prescriptions;

Rates of diabetic ketoacidosis;

Downstream impacts of insulin adherence (e.g. rates of dialysis treatment and end-stage renal disease);

Spending by Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health programs on acute care episodes that could be averted by adhering to an insulin prescription; and

Other factors, as appropriate.

The bill is supported by the American Diabetes Association (ADA), the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF), and T1International.

When insulin was first invented a century ago, the researchers sold the patent to the University of Toronto for just \$1 each, hoping that the drug would be used to save lives for everyone who needed it. But over the last two decades, the list price for the most common insulin products in the United States have increased six-fold for the exact same products.

The United States represents only 15 percent of the global insulin market, yet generates nearly half of the pharmaceutical industry's revenue on insulin. Lantus, a popular long-acting insulin, cost \$35 when it was first introduced in 2001. Within the past few years, the price of Lantus vial has skyrocketed to more than \$372, while that same exact drug was sold in France for \$46, and \$67 in Canada.