



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill Number: House Bill 1397 – Health Insurance – Prescription Insulin Drugs – Limits on Copayment and Coinsurance (Insulin Cost Reduction Act)

Hearing Date: March 15, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 1397 – Health Insurance – Prescription Insulin Drugs—Limits on Copayment and Coinsurance (Insulin Cost Reduction Act)*. This bill limits the amount a covered individual is required to pay in copayments or coinsurance for insulin. The cap is \$30 for a 30-day supply.

In Maryland alone, 10.5% or nearly 500,000 individuals have diabetes and 34% have prediabetes, approximately 1.6 million people.ⁱ Maryland is consistently one of the 25 states with the highest diabetes prevalence rates.ⁱⁱ Diabetes is also the sixth leading cause of death in our state. Insulin is used to manage blood sugar and is an important part of diabetes treatment. While insulin is effective in managing Type I diabetes, the costs for insulin related drugs are often a barrier and financial burden for populations with diabetes. Insulin prices in the United States have tripled over the past decade and patients are now paying double the amount of out-of-pocket costs.ⁱⁱⁱ Because of this drastic rise, 1 in 4 patients are beginning to ration the insulin provided to them, which often results in hospitalization or loss of life.^{iv}

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed legislation that would cap insulin copayments to \$35 for a 30-day supply. It is important that Maryland follow this lead to encourage better health outcomes for diabetics and prediabetics for our residents. Diabetes is a treatable disease and can be well managed with insulin. In Maryland, diabetes disproportionately impacts specific populations based on income and education level, race and ethnicity, geographic location and access to healthcare.^v We must make it affordable to better health outcomes for the residents of our state and provide adequate and sustainable care for individuals who have diabetes.

HB 1397 will help make insulin more affordable and save the lives of countless Marylanders. We urge a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at schitalia@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://health.maryland.gov/newsroom/Pages/Maryland-Department-of-Health-releases-first-statewide-diabetes-action-plan-with-intervention-strategies-to-engage-partners.aspx#:~:text=In%20Maryland%2C%2010.5%20percent%20of,the%20highest%20diabetes%20prevalence%20rates.>

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ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.verywellhealth.com/insulin-prices-how-much-does-insulin-cost-and-why-5081872>

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