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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
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**Testimony in Support of HB 1151 - Sales and Use Tax - Diabetic Care Products - Exemption**

HB 1151 is a straightforward bill that makes diabetic care products for the 700,000 Marylanders living with diabetes more affordable. This legislation creates a sales tax exemption for diabetic care items; including insulin tablets, blood and urine ketone supplies, insulin pumps, glucose monitors, syringes, insulin injection devices, testing strips for measuring blood sugar, and much more.

According to the most recent Maryland Vital Statistics Report, diabetes was the sixth leading cause of death among all Marylanders and the fifth leading cause of death among Black Maryland residents. Additionally, the diabetes rate among Black residents is twice as high as the rate among white residents.

In addition to the health and lifestyle complications associated with the disease, diabetes is also a major risk factor for developing cardiovascular disease, the number one cause of death both in Maryland as well as nationwide.

Roughly 1-in-10 Marylanders have been told by a health professional that they have diabetes, with more than 34 million people around the country living with the disease. People with diagnosed diabetes incur nearly \$10,000 in medical expenditures attributed to the disease every year. Just one vial of insulin can cost up to \$300, with most people needing two to three vials per month. Since 2012, list prices of many newer forms insulin have risen rapidly, with average annual increases of more than 15%.

The sales tax exemption created by HB 1151 will save Maryland residents much needed funds to address their health and well-being, as the costs of diabetic care continue to rise across the country. It's time to reduce the financial burden on Marylanders who need these essential care products.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1151.