



SEIUHealthcare.[®]
United for Quality Care

February 16, 2021

Chair Zack Stephenson
509 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St Paul, MN 55155

Jamie Gulley
President

Dear Chair Stephenson:

Jigme Ugen
Executive Vice President

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota represents 40,000 healthcare workers in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and self-directed homecare. On their behalf, I write to express our strong support for HF801, which would create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board. We think Minnesota should use any tool necessary to reduce the crippling cost of drugs.

Phillip Cryan
Executive Vice President

Brenda Hilbrich
Executive Vice President

Despite working in healthcare and sacrificing themselves to care for others, our members and their families struggle with the high cost of life-saving drugs. Many of you have met or heard about James Holt Jr. He is a service worker at Southdale Hospital and an Executive Board member of our union. After the high cost of insulin killed their son Alec, James and his wife Nicole worked with many of you to pass the Alec Smith Emergency Insulin Act. While this bill provides some relief to those in the worst emergencies, the regular cost of insulin is still an on-going and dangerous challenge for too many.

Rasha Ahmad Sharif
Executive Vice President

Dawn Burnfin is a homecare worker and SEIU Healthcare Minnesota member from Chisholm. After a visit to an emergency room, her daughter needed some anti-biotics to complete her recovery. But they cost \$375 and her daughter did not have \$375. Without the drugs, she got sicker. She went back to the ER, where they gave her another, even more expensive script. She simply could not afford to fill it, especially after missing more work. This cycle repeated itself, over and over, for months. She wound up in debt for several thousands of dollars, simply because her initial drug was unaffordable.

From talking to voters, you know these stories are just the tip of the iceberg. HF801 would have the power to set an affordability standard for drugs determined to cause a significant affordability challenge for patients or our state. It could help make sure people like Alec or Dawn's daughter get the drugs they need at a price they can afford.

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Sincerely yours,

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Rick Varco
Political Director