

Good afternoon Co-Chairs O'Driscoll and Koegel and members of the Commerce Finance and Policy Committee.

I am Patti Urbanski, MEd, RDN, CDCES, FADCES. I am a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist. I currently serve on the national board of directors of the American Diabetes Association (ADA), and served as the 2024 ADA President of Health Care and Education. My career in healthcare covers 40 years of patient care. I live in Cloquet, Minnesota.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House File 743 and thank Representative Howard for introducing this legislation.

I volunteer for the American Diabetes Association in order to support its mission “to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.” HF 743 takes an important step to improve the lives of people affected by diabetes and works to prevent devastating long-term complications from diabetes.

Insulin treatments vary significantly for people living with diabetes. In order to most effectively treat this chronic disease, it is critical that patients have timely access to the most effective treatments. In my job as a diabetes educator, I worked with a young adult who had seriously elevated glucose levels. Because of his health insurance’s step therapy requirements, we were unable to initiate the most effective insulin therapy for him until he failed to achieve improved glucose levels for two months. This period of extremely high glucose levels significantly increased his risk of long-term, and expensive, diabetes complications, including heart disease, nerve damage and kidney damage. After he ‘failed’ on the insurance-mandated insulin choice and started taking the concentrated insulin formulation he needed, his glucose levels significantly improved.

This is an example of how step therapy requirements can lead individuals to use medications that may be ineffective or cause adverse effects before they can access the prescribed insulin that works best for their diabetes. HF 743 ensures that providers, not insurers, have the final say in selecting the appropriate insulin.

When individuals are working hard to take care of their diabetes and follow their prescribed medication plan, they should not be punished with increased risk of health complications simply because their insurance plan will not allow use of the type of insulin they need.

Eliminating step therapy requirements for insulin will allow healthcare providers to prescribe the best insulin for each patient’s needs. This will improve the quality of life for individuals living with this challenging disease and significantly decrease risk of costly long-term health issues. This legislation can truly improve the lives of those living with diabetes.

As reflected in the mandate review report from the Department of Commerce, the Minnesota Management and Budget Office does not estimate any fiscal impact from the provisions of this legislation. Eliminating a step therapy protocol for insulin is another effective policy that can help patients access the right treatment at the right time, reduce health complications, and be cost effective in managing diabetes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I respectfully ask the committee to support House File 743.