

Testimony of Gail deVore

My name is Gail deVore. I have lived in Denver, Colorado, for 36 years. My husband is a 3rd generation Denverite. I am 58 years old and have had Type 1 diabetes since Valentine's Day 1972 that is 47 years, 1 month, and 19 days. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today about the high cost of insulin.

My husband and I are members of the middle class. We do not live extravagantly; we are very careful with our budget. And, we have decent insurance. Yet, the cost of taking care of myself as a diabetic eats a significant hole into our monthly budget. I drive a 17-year-old car that needs new struts. It's been a few years since we've had a real vacation. It is seriously doubtful that either of us will ever have the opportunity to retire.

Just as we all must have air to breathe to stay alive, every person on this Earth requires insulin to live. Most people's bodies make it on their own. However, Type 1 diabetics' auto-immune systems have malfunctioned and killed off the insulin producing cells. We require injections of insulin to stay alive. Without insulin our blood glucose levels rise, our blood becomes acidic, we fall into a coma, and then ***we will die without insulin.***

A little more than a year after I was diagnosed, there was a day that I did not get insulin for about 12 hours. I fell into a horrible coma, my parents rushed me to the hospital where I spent several days in the ICU and many more days in the hospital recovering.

I will always need exogenous insulin to stay alive. Every hour of every day of every week of every year for the rest of my life.

[Hold up 4 bottle of insulin]

This is one of my monthly insulin prescriptions. In 1972, 4 bottles of insulin cost my family about \$5.00 per month. With inflation, that is about \$100 per month today. Insulin was OTC then. Right now, these 4 bottles cost \$1400 at the full retail, no insurance price every month or \$16,400 per year. Each bottle is about \$350 at my pharmacy at the full price. For diabetics without insurance coverage or diabetics who have high deductible plans or when insurance doesn't cover what our doctors tell us to take – this is what we must pay out of our pockets to survive. My current insurance plan covers this type for me with a somewhat reasonable co-pay.

I also have a prescription for Fiasp, a newer faster-acting insulin. It is not on the formulary of our insurance plan. It is \$346.99 per bottle cash price per month. There is no way I can afford to use it the way my prescription is written. To make it last longer, I ration it by diluting it with Novolog, against the advice of Novo Nordisk and my doctors.

I am personal friends with many other diabetics who must come up with \$800, \$1200, and more at the pharmacy window before they meet their deductibles or when insurance does not cover their type of insulin. They too find creative ways to make insulin supplies last longer.

Some insurance plans require us to purchase 60- and 90-day supplies of insulin. That makes the immediate price tag even worse since it must be paid in full upon delivery.

Even though I have had Type 1 Diabetes for more than 47 years, I am healthy. Medical research shows that it is highly unlikely that I will suffer from complications from diabetes – *as long as I maintain the same level of control as I have now.*

The price of insulin directly impacts how well I can take care of myself.

I am not your typical diabetic. I know my way around government. I know who to call and have access to a few high-level administrators. I sit on the Board of Directors or on committees of the Nightscout Foundation, the JDRF, and the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, among others. I recently helped get a piece of legislation passed unanimously and signed into law in Colorado that helps all people that need life-sustaining medication. I am an advocate and a problem solver.

However, the reality is that we have few solutions for affording insulin. Yes, there are coupons and assistance programs. They are not available nor work for everyone. My friend Clayton McCook has a coupon that knocks \$50 off each bottle of insulin for his 11 y/o daughter Lily. Last week, that brought the cost down to \$1,398 with insurance for her 60 day supply of insulin.

The relief we need is right now. Not next week. Or next year. Before the discovery of insulin, every child that had diabetes died. There are no alternatives to insulin. It has been almost 100 years since my heroes, Dr. Banting and Dr. Best, figured out that insulin would save our lives. When they sold their patents to Eli Lilly for \$1 each, they intended it would always be affordable and accessible. Children and adults are still dying and suffering from disabling complications - because insulin is no longer affordable.