

March 30, 2021
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House Bill 2623, managing the cost of insulin

Chair Prusak and members of the House Committee on Health Care,

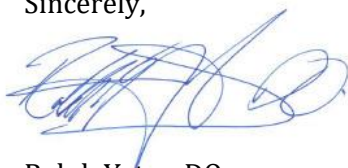
I am the chief medical officer at Salem Health, a local hospital and health system in the mid-Willamette valley. I am also a family physician, caring for many patients with diabetes, as I have for much of my career. I am writing to convey my support for House Bill 2623.

More than 500,000 Oregonians are living with diabetes, with roughly 20,000 newly diagnosed each year. About 15% of the Salem Health primary care patient population are living with a diabetes diagnosis. It is the seventh leading *official* cause of death in Oregon but plays a role in many more. The societal burden of untreated diabetes is not only physical. In 2015, the economic burden of diabetes in Oregon alone totaled \$3 billion due to medical costs and reduced productivity. It is one of the greatest health crisis facing our state and our country.

The arrival of insulin in the 1920's forever changed the prospects of people living with diabetes. Insulin presents the opportunity to manage their condition and offers hope for a long and healthy life. For a half million Oregonians, regular access to insulin is the difference between sickness and health. For others, it is a matter of life and death. When insulin prices become unaffordable, individuals and their families suffer, and are forced to make impossible choices. Efforts to prevent diabetes and properly support those living with diabetes are essential to the health and well-being of our community.

Facilitating access to life-saving drugs like insulin complements other legislative efforts enacted in recent years combat diabetes. Oregon will not be the first, nor last, to place a cap on insulin copay prices but after 100 years, the time to make insulin affordable to all who need it, is now. Thank you for your consideration, and I urge your support for House Bill 2623.

Sincerely,



Ralph Yates, DO
Chief Medical Officer
Salem Health