



MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS

Date: Thursday, February 6, 2020

Bill: **House Bill 134 – Health Insurance - Prescription Insulin Drugs - Limits on Copayment and Coinsurance**

Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
The Honorable Shane Pendergrass, Chairwoman

Position: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND) is submitting this letter of support for House Bill 134 – Health Insurance – Prescription Insulin Drugs – Limits on Copayment and Coinsurance sponsored by Delegates Reznik and Valderrama.

Diabetes in the adult population in Maryland is over 10 percent and is the sixth leading cause of mortality in the state. In 2017, diabetes was the fifth leading cause of death for African Americans and others of African descent. Diabetes is also a significant risk factor for developing cardiovascular disease, the number one cause of death in Maryland and nationwide. Moreover, the underlying cause of Type 2 diabetes is overweight and obesity, the rate of which has steadily increased to over 64 percent of Maryland adults.

Additionally, there are disparities in how diabetes and its risk factors affect Marylanders with racial/ethnic minority groups, those with less education, and persons of lower income disproportionately burdened. The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes is more than twice as high for persons with less than a high school education compared to persons with a college degree or above. Furthermore, despite the prevalence of diabetes being higher for adults with an income below \$15,000 compared to adults with income at or above 75,000, persons with diabetes have medical expenses that are approximately 2.3 times higher than those without this diagnosis. (Maryland Diabetes Action Plan, 2019.)

House Bill 134 will require individual insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to limit the cumulative amount an individual under their policy needs to pay in copayments or coinsurance for a covered prescription insulin drug. Individuals with diabetes are financially disadvantaged by the cost of care which can negatively affect their ability to afford the co-pay for their prescription insulin, especially as many in this population are already dealing with other issues such as access to affordable health care, housing, food insecurity, and everyday burdens of living.

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics offers our full support of House Bill 134, and respectfully urges the Health and Government Operations Committee to pass this measure in order to help reduce the financial burden for people with diabetes living in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenda L. Lindsey, Dr. PH, MS, RDN, LDN, *Public Policy Coordinator*

Jessica Kiel , RDN, LDN, *Delegate*

Angela Green, MS, RDN, LDN, *President, Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*