

**HB 134 Health Insurance - Prescription Insulin Drugs - Limits on Copayment and
Coinsurance
SUPPORT
Health and Government Operations Committee**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Pendergrass and members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee. My name is Jim Gutman. I am from Howard County Maryland and I am a volunteer for AARP MD and I am also a volunteer Medicare drug plan counselor for the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP). Aside from my volunteer work, I have more than 25 years of writing, editing, publishing and owning (for 10 years) subscription business and regulatory newsletters on pharmaceuticals and managed care and, before that, about two years with drug manufacturer Johnson & Johnson as corporate manager of editorial services.

I am here today representing AARP MD and its more than 870,000 members in support of HB 134 which caps the cost-sharing price or co-pay of **insulin** at \$100 for a 30-day supply. We thank Delegate Reznik for bringing this important bill forward.

As you may know, AARP is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the interests of Americans age 50 and older and their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security. In particular, AARP strongly believes that all individuals have the right to be self-reliant and live with dignity in retirement.

In my four open-enrollment seasons as a Medicare drug plan counselor with SHIP, soaring prescription insulin drug costs have been among the biggest, if not the biggest, financial problem I've seen affecting the people I've counseled. As a recent *Vox* article noted, about one in four people with diabetes are now skimping on or skipping insulin doses because of the big price hikes in the past 15 years, and my experience as a Medicare drug plan counselor with SHIP clients indicate this is true. Plus all Type 1 diabetics need insulin, and many of the more common Type 2 diabetics do as well.

The rising cost of essential necessities, including groceries, utilities, and prescription drugs, are of significant concern for millions of Marylanders, especially for older and retired

Marylanders living on fixed incomes. In fact, in 2017, 22% of Maryland residents stopped taking medication as prescribed due to rising costs.

We believe it is imperative we do something to help Marylanders afford their out-pocket cost especially for insulin. For these reasons **AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for House Bill 134.**

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@arp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.