



**Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 610
Submitted to the House Labor and Commerce Committee
February 1, 2024**

Monica Billger, State Government Affairs Director – American Diabetes Association

Chair Ward and Honorable Members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee:

On behalf of the American Diabetes Association (ADA), thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of House Bill 610**.

Virginia, like the rest of the country, is experiencing a diabetes epidemic. The ADA estimates that almost 1 million people have diabetes in Virginia – 1 in 10 adults across the Commonwealth. **Diabetes** is a chronic illness that **requires continuing medical care and ongoing patient self-management** to prevent acute complications and reduce the risk of long-term complications.

Diabetes equipment and supplies are integral to proper diabetes care and self-management, and thus to remaining healthy. The **complications of diabetes** are serious and costly - one in four dollars allocated to health care is dedicated to caring for individuals with diabetes, an estimated cost of \$8.4 billion in Virginia alone. Complications can include end-stage kidney disease, lower limb amputation, blindness, heart attack, and stroke. **Individuals with diabetes need access to vital supplies and equipment - that also need to be affordable for the person with diabetes to manage their diabetes, prevent complications and protect their health.**

For many, modern diabetes care involves the use of Continuous Glucose Monitors, also known as CGMs. CGMs provide glucose readings every few minutes, allowing for a better understanding of changes in glucose to guide one's diabetes self-management. CGMs can also provide warning information that helps prevent short-term complications. **CGMs are the standard of care for insulin-treated individuals with diabetes, leading to improved clinical quality, better health outcomes, and reduced health care costs.**

Much attention has appropriately focused on the cost of insulin. As such we are thankful to see this legislation exempt the cost of insulin coverage from any deductible. However as noted above, a recent study relating to people with diabetes who need to use insulin, found that their **cost sharing for diabetes equipment and supplies can also be burdensome**. And we've conducted surveys confirming **rationing of supplies**, as well as **others not taking advantage of equipment that can improve care** due to the related cost sharing burden.

Furthermore we applaud HB 610 for recognizing the difficulty of attending critical diabetes self-management training and education in-person. This holds especially true for Virginians in rural areas, or those that have trouble with mobility and transportation. **HB610 allows for a telemedicine option for necessary self-management training and education services.**

Given the importance of affordable access to diabetes equipment and supplies in managing diabetes to achieve healthy outcomes, reduce the chance of potentially disabling or deadly complications, and defray the overwhelming cost of diabetes to Virginians as well as the Commonwealth - the American Diabetes Association urges you to look favorably on HB 610.

Thank you for your consideration, and please let me know if you need any additional information about this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monica Billger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Monica" and last name "Billger" clearly distinguishable.

Monica Billger, Director, State Government Affairs

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