

Testimony to the insurance and Real Estate Committee
Submitted by Victoria Loo, Universal Health Care Foundation CT
Regarding Bill HB 5384: An Act Concerning Prescription Drug Costs
March 5, 2018

My name is Victoria Loo and I am a student from the Yale School of Public Health and an intern with Universal Health Care Foundation CT. I recently went to a talk at the Yale Law School on insulin drug costs and was incredibly shocked at the account of personal stories I heard from individuals who struggled every day to pay for their insulin. Insulin is a necessary medication for individuals with diabetes, often a matter of life and death. On March 18 2017, a man named Shane Patrick Boyle died from Type 1 Diabetes. Like many individuals with Type 1 diabetes, Shane had been forced to ration his insulin prescription by stretching it to take smaller doses, and in the absence of proper insulin intake, Shane had diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) within 24 hours and died. Before his death, Shane had set up a GoFundMe page to seek help to afford his insulin. Shane is not the only one. A GoFundMe search revealed 19,281 results of similar pages crowdsourcing money to help pay for diabetes-related care.

More and more people are being forced to choose between lifesaving drugs or putting food on their table. Skyrocketing drug prices need to be stopped, and pharmaceutical corporations, PBMs, and insurance companies must be held accountable. Drug companies need to be prevented from raising their prices to outrageously high numbers. The price of insulin already averages \$360 per single vial.

While HB 5384 provides a good start to addressing this issue, this bill can do more. Nowhere in the bill does it mention initiatives against price gouging. The CT Healthcare Cabinet's top recommendation was to establish a Drug Review Board to investigate potential pricing abuses and make referrals to the Attorney General to take action against excessive price increase. In addition, other states require pharmaceutical corporations to justify their prices increases at lower thresholds than the one proposed in HB 5384.

I encourage you to support HB 5384 as it takes the first of many steps to address the issue of prescription drug costs in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time,
Victoria Loo