**Testimony of Nicole Smith-Holt to the Insulin (HF3100) Conference Committee**

**April 8, 2020**

The first thing I want to say is thank you for holding this conference committee hearing remotely during what we all know is a very challenging time. Your efforts to finalize this bill are so, so important because right now we are seeing many insulin-dependent diabetics in Minnesotan staring at a horrific crisis in the making due the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting job losses and layoffs. I can tell you that, in the past month, I have arranged for more insulin to be provided to diabetics than I did in the previous six months combined. And it’s a problem that is growing worse by the day.

I also want to personally thank Representative Howard and Senator Jensen for their leadership on this effort and for working with us on this important issue. The community of diabetics, and family members of diabetics, are grateful for your time and dedication to doing what will result in the saving of lives and the health of Minnesota’s diabetics.

I know this bill is not perfect. Moving the eligibility to 500% of poverty, and allowing for participation in the emergency program to 90 days would have been preferred. But I and other insulin affordability advocates also understand the importance of legislative compromise and the urgent need to get this bill passed now.

I do, however, want to thank you for compromising to lower the copay and to remove the sunset. For insulin-dependent diabetics who have lost their jobs and or insurance due to the coronavirus pandemic, every single dollar makes a difference. And as we have argued in the past, the insulin-affordability and access crisis is not going to go away in a year or two.

I’m sure that in the work that you do day-in-and-day-out as legislators you sometimes truly wonder the impact of the bills you pass. I’m here today to tell you that if this bill had been in place three years ago, my son Alec would still be alive today and would be still be brightening the lives of those around him. Jesy Scherer-Radcliff would also still be alive and the positive impact he had on so many people would still be taking place today. Passing this bill and sending it to the governor for his signature will save Minnesota lives—pure and simple.

Thank you again for meeting to discuss and act on this bill. Again, I strongly urge you to act quickly on it to help stem the crisis that diabetics are facing, and which is now quickly expanding due to the coronavirus.