



# SEIU Healthcare

## United for Quality Care

April 8, 2020

Dear HF3100 Conference Committee Members:

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota represent over 35,000 workers in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes and self-directed home care. On their behalf, I write in support of the Conference Committee report. It is an imperfect compromise, but one that makes a major leap forward in the fight for insulin affordability.

**Jamie Gulley**  
President

**Jigme Ugen**  
Executive Vice President

**Lisa Weed**  
Executive Vice President

**Phillip Cryan**  
Executive Vice President

This issue is deeply personal for the members of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota because it starts with the family of one of our members. That member is James Holt Jr. He is an environmental-services worker at M Health/Fairview Southdale Hospital and an Executive Board member of our union. James and his wife Nicole have been in the news and at the Capitol often. They have been telling the story of how the high cost of insulin killed their son, Alec. Twenty-seven days after his coverage lapsed, unable to afford insulin, and rationing his supply to make it last, Alec was found dead in his apartment killed by the very condition insulin would have prevented.

We are here today because James and Nicole took their private pain public. They were joined by countless others with similar stories. Each one of them shared their experiences making life or death decisions to find the money to get insulin or try to ration the little they had. These private stories forced all of us to make a public decision. Would we as a community let pharmaceutical companies continue to exploit diabetics or would we insist that a life-saving drug is a public good and one we must take steps to provide for everyone?

When a drug company looked at Alec, they saw a perfect customer. His need was absolute, immediate, and constant. He would pay whatever money he had, as soon as he had it, so of course they would set the price high. HF3100 begins to redress that injustice. It says that here in Minnesota people with diabetes are human beings first, people whose lives we all value, before they are customers. At least in the most desperate circumstances, it says we as a community must provide some access to those in life or death need.

Thank you to the members who worked out this compromise and to all the insulin activists whose tireless efforts over the last two years forced us to face this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Rick Varco  
Political Director

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