

THE SENATE OF TEXAS

STATE CAPITOL, 3S.5
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711
(512) 463-0127

1210 W. INTERSTATE 2, STE. 10
PHARR, TEXAS 78577
(956) 787-5227



7 NORTH PARK PLAZA
BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS 78521
(956) 548-0227

700 FM 3168
RAYMONDSVILLE, TEXAS 78580
(956) 689-1860, EXT. 230

SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
State Capitol, 2S.1
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your continued commitment to the people of Texas during this unprecedented time. As the state's top executive, you have shown great leadership by issuing executive orders addressing the unimaginable hardships Texans are facing. Your actions have consistently demonstrated your ability to work with stakeholders to ensure our state is healthy and safe. Texans are experiencing new adversities that no one could have predicted and a growing number of Texans are now having to make difficult financial decisions in order to meet a monthly budget. While we are all adjusting to this new reality, no one should have to make the choice between purchasing either groceries or life-saving medication. It is in the spirit of Texas' continuing effort to help its people through this crisis that I respectfully request that you provide financial relief from high co-pays.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that nearly eleven percent of Texans, over 3 million residents of our state, live with diabetes, many of whom depend on insulin to survive. Even before this crisis, Texans faced high out-of-pocket expenses, with co-pays reaching into the hundreds of dollars monthly. Unfortunately, diabetes is disproportionately prevalent in minority populations as well as in distressed communities. The high cost of medication frequently leads to financial insecurity and difficult sacrifices relating to diabetes management, which could jeopardize health and cause life-threatening complications. According to the CDC, diabetics and other with underlying conditions face a much higher mortality rate from COVID-19. With the increased mortality rate with COVID-19, financial strain caused by high co-pays, and fear of loss of insurance due to job insecurity, diabetics are facing burdens many of us do not have to face. People should not die because they cannot afford to live. I humbly urge you to issue an emergency order which removes co-pays for insulin as well as ensures the continuity of healthcare by stating nobody be removed from Medicaid or removed from their health insurance plans. This order should be in effect throughout the crisis and until the Legislature can convene for its 2021 legislative session.



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Though some drug manufacturers are independently deciding to cap co-pay amounts for insulin during the crisis, it is my opinion that Texas needs to affirm its commitment to those who face unimaginably high co-pays as well, regardless of the brand or type of insulin needed. That is why today I humbly ask you for this emergency order. I believe it would be a tremendous help to millions of Texans and will reaffirm the state's commitment to protecting the health and vitality of Texans through this crisis.

I thank you in advance for your consideration on behalf of the millions of Texans with diabetes. Your efforts to assure Texans that our state is firmly behind them will not be forgotten.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Lucio, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddie Lucio, Jr.
State Senator

