

National group says insulin prices jeopardizing health of diabetics, urges consumer action

RxRights, a nonprofit group concerned with the high cost of medicine, has launched a campaign to pressure pharmaceutical manufacturers to reduce insulin prices.



ST PAUL, MN, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [RxRights](#), a national nonprofit group concerned with the high price of medicine is targeting drug companies who make insulin with their [latest action campaign](#). They're asking consumers to contact the three drug companies that supply the country's insulin. The message: your insulin prices are [jeopardizing the health](#) of American diabetics.

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Lee Graczyk, lead organizer for RxRights

Only three companies—Eli Lilly, Novo Nordisk and Sanofi—supply all of the insulin that's sold in the United States. Sanofi raised the price of its Lantus insulin twice in 2013, increasing the cost by up to 15 percent. Novo Nordisk hiked prices by 10 percent. A single bottle of Eli Lilly's Humulin U-500, which lasts for a month, reportedly jumped from \$220 in 2007 to \$1200 in 2014 (wholesale price).

“We regularly hear from Americans who can't afford their insulin. And they're increasingly resorting to desperate measures to maintain access to this life-sustaining medicine,” says Lee Graczyk, lead organizer for RxRights. “We recently heard from someone who was considering taking insulin

formulated for dogs because it was cheaper and he felt like he had no other options. This is a seriously dangerous situation.”

Close to 29 million Americans have diabetes—that's 1 in every 11 people. Before effective treatments were discovered, diabetes had devastating and ultimately deadly consequences. Thanks to the discovery of insulin, quality of life and survival rates for diabetics have vastly improved. But diabetes is still the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

Insulin was discovered almost a century ago. In 1923, Fred Banting and Charles Best sold the patent for \$1 to help enable the breakthrough diabetic treatment achieve quick and wide availability. New and improved formulations of the drug allow companies to continue patenting new versions of the hormone and increasing the price. But in recent years, price increases have occurred on existing versions of the drug. Patents on some popular insulin formulas have begun to expire, which can lead to price increases as companies try to increase profits from their branded drugs before generic competition enters the market.

Medical expenses and lost wages related to diabetes cost the U.S. \$245 billion per year. The cost of

managing the disease has doubled in the last two decades—much of that has been attributed to rising drug costs.

RxRights is a national coalition concerned about the high cost of U.S. pharmaceuticals and is dedicated to promoting and protecting American consumer access to sources of safe, affordable prescription drugs.

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