February 6, 2020
The Honorable Delegate Pendergrass
241 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Pendergrass and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

The National Psoriasis Foundation (NPF) is the leading patient advocacy group for more than 8.3 million Americans and the over 152,000 Maryland residents living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. I write to you today to express our support for HB 134 to limit the copayment or coinsurance for a covered prescription insulin drug to not more than $100. Patients with psoriatic disease are at a heightened risk to develop other chronic conditions, including diabetes and hypertension, cardiovascular disease and stroke, as well as depression and anxiety. HB 134 will help individuals with diabetes, who may also be managing other chronic conditions like psoriasis, have affordable access to insulin.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that individuals with psoriatic disease face a higher risk for diabetes, even when controlling for risk factors such as obesity and hypertension. One study that compared over 100,000 individuals with psoriasis to matched patients without psoriasis found that patients with mild psoriasis had an 11% increased risk of diabetes and patients with severe psoriasis had a 46% higher risk of diabetes. Another study found that, after accounting for diabetes risk factors, diabetes risk increased by 20% with every 10% increase in psoriasis body surface area.

It is critical that patients with psoriatic disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions have the tools they need to effectively manage their disease. When facing high out of pocket costs, patients often do not use their medications appropriately; skipping doses in order to save money or abandoning treatment altogether. Furthermore, according to several studies prescription abandonment rates increase significantly when cost-sharing exceeds just $100.

By limiting the cost of insulin prescriptions to $100, HB 134 would help reduce patient costs, thereby improving patient’s ability to access insulin. We appreciate your attention on this important matter. Should you have any questions regarding this issue please reach out to Patrick Stone, Vice President Government Relations and Advocacy with the National Psoriasis Foundation at pstone@psoriasis.org.

Sincerely,

Patrick Stone
VP, Government Relations and Advocacy