

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 22, 2019

Mr. David A. Ricks  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Eli Lilly and Company  
Lilly Corporate Center  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46285

Mr. Olivier Brandicourt  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sanofi  
55 Corporate Drive  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Mr. Doug Langa  
Executive Vice President, North America Operations  
President of Novo Nordisk Inc.  
800 Scudders Mill Road  
Plainsboro, NJ 08536

Dear Mr. Ricks, Mr. Langa, and Mr. Brandicourt,

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) requests a meeting with you to discuss the rising cost of insulin. We are deeply concerned about patient access and affordability, particularly because Hispanic men and women are 50 percent more likely to die from diabetes than non-Hispanic populations and are at greater risk of developing prediabetes.<sup>1</sup> We understand that Eli Lilly, Sanofi, and Novo Nordisk are the only insulin manufacturers in the United States, effectively controlling the American insulin market. Consequently, you play a fundamental role in ensuring access to this life-saving medication. The CHC is composed of 36 Members of the House of Representatives and two United States Senators. Our Members sit on key House and Senate Committees including the House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Ways and Means Committee, House Appropriations Committee, House Financial Services Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. Combating high insulin prices is a top priority for the CHC given that the insulin crisis is impacting many Latinos and can be especially devastating to working and low-income families. We urge you to meet with the CHC in May to discuss the contributing factors of escalating costs and the steps you are taking to ensure that insulin remains affordable.

Diabetes is a major public health emergency within the Hispanic community. Roughly 16.8 percent of Hispanic men and women have diabetes compared to the 10.2 percent for non-Hispanic populations.<sup>2</sup> More concerning is that diabetes is a leading cause of mortality for Hispanics.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, there is a higher dependence on insulin in our communities and the soaring costs are causing families to make difficult choices to secure this life-saving drug. It is imperative that Hispanics, who are disproportionately affected by diabetes, have affordable access to insulin so they can manage this disease in a suitable manner.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/features/hispanichealth/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.diabetes.org/newsroom/press-releases/2014/diabetes-among-hispanics-all-are-not-equal.html>

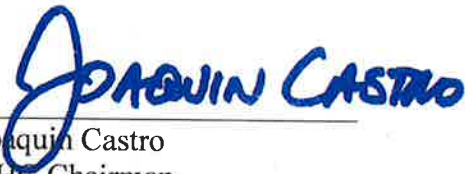
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.diabetes.org/newsroom/press-releases/2014/diabetes-among-hispanics-all-are-not-equal.html>

However, this is not the case. Diabetics are paying approximately \$300 for insulin. This price is even more outrageous because the patent for insulin was sold for \$1 so that everyone who needed the medication could afford it. Despite this intention, the price has increased over 1,000 percent from its original patent price (accounting for inflation) and tripled over the last decade. Unsurprisingly, the mushrooming costs have created an insulin crisis driving Americans to desperate ends to secure the drug. There are reports of diabetics rationing their insulin supplies, which can lead to seizures, heart irregularities, loss of consciousness and death.<sup>4</sup> In fact, a study by Yale University found that one in four people with diabetes in America have cut back on their insulin because of cost.<sup>5</sup> This trend must stop and that begins with offering insulin at reasonable and accessible prices.

The CHC would like to work with each of you to deliver insulin at affordable prices. The skyrocketing costs are negatively impacting our communities and endangering the health of Americans. We must ensure that manufacturers are taking all the steps necessary to drive costs down so our communities no longer have to ration insulin or pursue alternative means harmful to their health. We look forward to discussing these issues with you in person.

Please contact Congressional Hispanic Caucus Executive Director Alma Acosta at [alma.acosta@mail.house.gov](mailto:alma.acosta@mail.house.gov) for any questions.

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro  
CHC Chairman



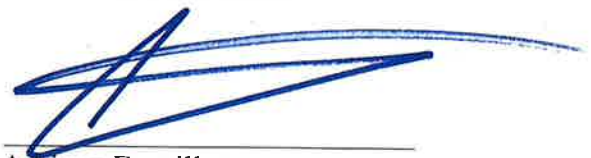
Nanette Diaz Barragan  
CHC Second Vice-Chair



Veronica Escobar  
Freshman Representative



Ruben Gallego  
CHC First Vice-Chair



Adriano Espaillat  
CHC Whip



Raul Ruiz  
Health Care and Mental Health  
Task Force Chair

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.theweek.co.uk/100236/what-s-behind-america-s-insulin-crisis>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.theweek.co.uk/100236/what-s-behind-america-s-insulin-crisis>