Backgrounder: Reducing the Costs of Managing Diabetes

A re-elected Saskatchewan Party government will expand financial support for Saskatchewan residents living with diabetes by:

(1) Expanding eligibility for the current Saskatchewan Insulin Pump Program to Saskatchewan residents of all ages who require an insulin pump to manage their Type 1 diabetes.

(2) Providing financial coverage for Continuous Glucose Monitoring systems and supplies for children and youth under the age of 18 who are insulin dependent.

Expanding the Saskatchewan Insulin Pump Program to Individuals Age 26 and Above

- The Saskatchewan Insulin Pump Program covers the cost of insulin pumps and insulin supplies. Insulin itself is a Saskatchewan drug plan benefit. Eligibility for the program is currently restricted to Saskatchewan residents age 25 and under with Type 1 diabetes.

- The program was increased from age 17 to age 25 as part of the 2011 Saskatchewan Party election platform.

- Eliminating the age restriction and allowing individuals age 26 and above to access the program is expected to benefit over 400 individuals.

- It's expected that new beneficiaries will receive their pumps over a two-year period:

    - 240 new beneficiaries are expected to access pumps and supplies in the first year of the program's expanded eligibility. 175 additional beneficiaries are expected to access pumps and supplies in the second year of the program's expanded eligibility.

    - Existing patients are eligible for a new pump every 5 years.

- Expansion of the Insulin Pump program will come into effect following the 2021-22 Budget.

Cost:

- Incremental cost of the expanded program including pumps and supplies is expected to be $2.1M in the first year of the program's expanded eligibility and $2.2M in the second year, with an annualized cost of $2M in future years.

Providing Financial Coverage for Continuous Glucose Monitoring Systems and Supplies for Children and Youth Under 18 who are Insulin Dependent

- Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) systems are a relatively new technology that allows users, and those they share the information with, to monitor and measure glucose levels in real-time throughout the day using tiny sensors inserted under the skin. The data generated from CGM's can be transmitted to others, who can access the data using a smart phone.

- Approximately 600 children and youth under the age of 18 in Saskatchewan are expected to benefit from the coverage of CGM's.

- The benefits of using CGM's include:
    - A reduced need to finger prick using a conventional glucose monitor.

    - Most importantly for parents: The ability for the user and others who receive the data, such as their parents, to read and record glucose levels using external technology such as a smart phone.

    - Applicability for use by children over the age of two. This provides parents of very young children with diabetes with far greater control and security when monitoring their children's diabetes (such as when children are sleeping).

- Providing financial coverage for the cost of CGM's for children and youth under the age of 18 will help support parents to manage their children's diabetes. Coverage will include the annual cost of the devices and sensors that comprise CGM's.

- The cost of CGM's are approximately $4,400 annually, including devices and sensors. Coverage of the systems will not be income tested, similar to the Saskatchewan Insulin Pump program. Insulin itself will continue to be covered as a drug plan benefit.

- While it's assumed most parents will choose to access Continuous Glucose Monitoring Systems (CGM's), there may be cases where parents believe that Flash Glucose Monitoring systems (FCM's) better suit their children's needs. In these cases, parent's will be able to opt to have coverage for FCM's.

- Program cost is $2.6 million annually and will come into effect following the 2021-22 Budget.

Total Cost:

- **Insulin Pump Program Expansion:**
    - **2021-22: $2.1M**
    - **2022-23: $2.2M**
    - **2023-24 and annually: $2M**
- **Continuous Glucose Monitoring: $2.6M annually**