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WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR • 14<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Sen. Keyeski Introduces Bill to Set Price Cap on Lifesaving Asthma Medication and Inhalers**

MADISON – Senator Sarah Keyeski (D-Lodi) recently joined Senator Kristin Dassler-Alfheim (D-Appleton) in introducing LRB-2478/1, which would ensure that lifesaving medication and medical supplies used to treat asthma are affordable and accessible for patients in need.

This bill would require health insurance policies and plans that cover prescription drugs to cover the medication and supplies needed by individuals with asthma. It would also cap the out-of-pocket expenses patients would have to pay for prescription drugs to treat asthma at \$25 per one month supply and at \$50 per one month supply of medical supplies used to administer these drugs, such as asthma inhalers.

This bill was inspired by the story of Cole Schmidtknecht, a Wisconsinite who had chronic asthma. When he was abruptly told his insurance no longer covered his asthma medication, he had to decide whether to pay the new cost of his inhaler – which had increased by 700% without insurance coverage – or pay his rent. Cole chose to pay his rent, and tragically, he had a fatal asthma attack just days later. He was 22 years old.

Sen. Keyeski released the following statement in response to the introduction of LRB-2478/1:

“No one should be forced to choose between the medication they need to stay safe and healthy and other necessities. Cole’s story is both heartbreaking and entirely preventable. This tragedy could have been avoided if a law was in place to protect people who rely on asthma medication to survive. That is why this bill is so essential.

“We must do better for our friends, family, and neighbors living with chronic conditions. We can and *must* take urgent action to lower the cost of prescription drugs and medical supplies so everyone has the opportunity to live a long, healthy life.”

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