

# U.S. Rep Pocan: Announces Kathy Honerbaum as State of the Union Guest

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**WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Mark Pocan (WI-02)** today announced Kathy Honerbaum, a retired nurse of over 50 years in Dodgeville, as his guest for the State of the Union. Honerbaum, after recently being diagnosed with breast cancer, was prescribed Ibrance, a \$13,000 per month drug, with a \$2,800 copay with Medicare Part D. If H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, were passed, Ibrance would be included in the list of drugs to be negotiated because it is the seventeenth-most costly drug to Medicare part D.

For months, Honerbaum could not afford Ibrance, despite repeated attempts to request financial support from the drug's manufacturer, Pfizer. Honerbaum finally cut back on her working hours and entered an early retirement, so that she could meet the low-income threshold Pfizer has set for drug waivers. Finally, the pharmaceutical company covered the cost of her drug, but months later she found out the drug was not working. Luckily, her new drug, Xeloda, has no co-pay. Everyone isn't so 'lucky.'

"Big Pharma's tight grip on life-saving drugs for millions of Americans has gone unchecked for far too long. When people across the country know the name of the drug that could save their lives, but cannot afford it without taking out another mortgage on their home or going into bankruptcy—that's a problem," **said Rep. Pocan.** "Kathy's story is a heartbreaking one that is all too familiar for the millions of people in this country who have to upend their entire lives to afford their medications. If the Lower Drugs Cost Act Now Act was law, Kathy would not have had to go into an early retirement to afford her cancer drug—it would have been affordable. Kathy's story is a story that must be told to every Senator and President

Trump as they continue to drag their feet on lowering the cost of drugs, and that's why I am lucky to have her as my guest for the State of the Union."

"No one should have to go through what I had to go through to afford medication that could help save a life," **said Kathy Honerbaum**. "It is appalling that even basic medication like insulin costs families thousands of dollars. After pouring my heart out to Pfizer, I was lucky to have my drug covered, but luck should have nothing to do with our healthcare."

The Lower Drug Costs Now Act, which passed in the House in December, is sweeping legislation that would dramatically reduce drug prices by giving Medicare the power to negotiate directly with drug companies, ensuring lower drug prices for Americans. The bill would give the Department of Health and Human Services the power to negotiate on 50 of the highest cost and highest utilized drugs, including Ibrance.