

# AG Lynn Fitch files lawsuit against insulin manufacturers and PBMs over Insulin Pricing Scheme

*“As the mother of a diabetic, I know the emotional, physical, and financial toll the unconscionable price of insulin has on families. I filed this lawsuit on behalf of every Mississippian who relies on this medication to survive. These companies are exploiting the vulnerable. I’m fighting back because you should never have to decide between paying the ever-increasing price of insulin or compromising your care.” Lynn Fitch*

Attorney General Lynn Fitch filed a lawsuit yesterday at the Chancery Court of Hinds County against drug manufacturers and pharmacy benefit managers (“PBMs”) working in tandem to manipulate and inflate insulin prices.

“As the mother of a diabetic, I know the emotional, physical, and financial toll the unconscionable price of insulin has on families,” said Attorney General Lynn Fitch. “I filed this lawsuit on behalf of every Mississippian who relies on this medication to survive. These companies are exploiting the vulnerable. I’m fighting back because you should never have to decide between paying the ever-increasing price of insulin or compromising your care.”

The complaint states, “Mississippi has the highest prevalence of diabetes in the United States with 13.6% of its population – over 400,000 people – living with diabetes... Diabetes is the leading

cause of blindness, kidney failure, and lower limb amputations and is the seventh leading cause of death in Mississippi despite the availability of effective treatment. Over 22% of all hospitalizations in Mississippi are attributable to diabetes.”

The total estimated cost of diagnosed diabetes in Mississippi is \$3.5 billion, with one in four health care dollars spent caring for people with diabetes.

Over the course of the last decade, these companies have raised the reported prices of their respective diabetes drugs up to 1,000 percent, down to the decimal point within a few days of each other. Even though, over the last fifteen years, the cost of producing these drugs has actually decreased, a diabetic in 2016 spent, on average, \$5,705 for insulin needed to survive.

Attorney General Fitch alleges that the reason behind the increase is a fraudulent conspiracy between billion-dollar companies known as PBMs and the Manufacturer Defendants.

In their “Insulin Pricing

Scheme,” the Manufacturer Defendants artificially and willingly raise their reported prices, and then deceptively refund a significant portion of that price back to PBMs through things called rebates, discounts, credits, and administration fees. They also switch medications within their formularies to suit their pricing scheme to the detriment of diabetics relying on those drugs.

This practice has resulted in record profits for Defendants at the expense of diabetics and payors, such as the State of Mississippi, who have been overcharged millions of dollars a year for egregiously inflated diabetes medications.

The complaint alleges violations of the Mississippi Consumer Protection Act for unfair and deceptive practices as well as unjust enrichment and civil conspiracy. These excessive prices cause some diabetics in Mississippi to ration or underdose their insulin, inject expired insulin, re-use needles, and starve themselves to control their blood sugar to use as little insulin as possible. This compromise in care is extremely dangerous and can lead to serious complications or, in some cases, death.

With this lawsuit, Attorney General Lynn Fitch seeks to hold the Defendants accountable, to protect the health and well-being of the hundreds of thousands of diabetic Mississippians, and to protect the economic interests of the State.

# Carroll County student receives local educator memorial scholarship

Durant, MS—Migration Heritage Foundation (MHF) proudly awarded its Geneva Nelson Memorial Scholarship of \$1000 to Wil’Tavious Williams of Coila, MS. Wil’Tavious, is a 2021 graduate of J. Z. George High School in North Carrollton. He intends to attend Mississippi College in the fall of 2021 to become an engineer.

To meet heritage-related requirements for the award, Mr. Williams described how an awareness of his great-grandfather’s beliefs and motivations inspired him to succeed. He wrote, “There’s never anything wrong with treating folks right,” my great-grandfather always stated. My great-grandfather was a farmer and a bus driver for the public school system. He attended services at New Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Holmes County, where he has been a member since 1938. Mr. Norman Cobbins believed that strong family values, a strong faith in God, and hard work will yield success. “The legacy of my great-grandfather,” Wil’Tavious continued, “has allowed me to acknowledge the impact that it has had in shaping me to be the kind of person I am today. I am determined to accomplish each of my goals, I am motivated to excel in all academic areas, and I am driven to put my best foot forward in this educational quest to not only obtain, but to earn my degree. I am striving for excellence. However, I know that all my goals will remain dreams if I do not put God first, and if I do not put forth tremendous efforts that it will take to achieve them. Therefore, I am committed to working relentlessly in school. I am committed to

these emergency loans is February 8, 2022.

FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability.

FSA has a variety of additional programs to help farmers recover from the impacts of this disaster. FSA programs that do not require a disaster declaration include: Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program; Emergency Conservation Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Livestock Indemnity Program; Operating and Farm Ownership Loans; and the Tree Assistance Program.

Farmers may contact their local USDA service center for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <https://www.farmers.gov/recover>.



WIL’TAVIOUS WILLIAMS

exploring opportunities that will make my aspirations become a reality. I am committed to success.” These heritage-inspired acclamations convinced the MHF Scholarship Committee that Mr. Williams was deserving of the Geneva Nelson Memorial Scholarship.

Geneva Nelson worked for more than four decades teaching in Mississippi. As a new college graduate, she started teaching at Mileston Vocational High School, near Tchula during the late 1950s. When Mileston relocated its high school students to Tchula Attendance Center (TAC) in 1961, Ms. Nelson followed them. She remained at TAC until 1967, when she transferred to Jackson to work as a teacher and counselor at Blackburn School. She moved from Blackburn to Bailey in the same city in 1971 and became an assistant principal there in 1978. Nelson transferred again to Chastain School in Jackson in 1984 and remained there as assistant principal until

1986. An early morning fire that engulfed Nelson’s West Jackson home in January 2012 brought a tragic end to her life.

Though Ms. Nelson interfaced with Mileston/TAC students, more than three decades ago and departed this life almost a decade ago, her impact on pupils she taught continues. Two of those grateful Mileston/TAC students, include Dennis Smothers and Dr. Mary G. (Patterson) Patton. Smothers and Patton are graduates of the TAC Class of 1962. With this generous scholarship, they memorialize Nelson’s contribution to the economically, socially, and academically disadvantaged students in the Hills and Delta of Holmes County. Smothers fondly recalled that “Ms. Nelson reached out to meet students where they were and, in the process, she made all of her students feel like equal human beings.” “She treated them the same way,” Smothers continued, Ms. Nelson found ways to demand and get quality.”

MHF has awarded scholarships to more than 40 economically, socially, and academically disadvantaged students since 2013. With support from donors, the Foundation moves closer to realizing its vision to document the past and shape the future by providing educational and other opportunities for marginalized populations. For more information, e-mail Dr. Sylvia Reedy Gist at [info@mhrtr.us](mailto:info@mhrtr.us), or visit MHF’s web site at [www.mhrtr.us](http://www.mhrtr.us).

## Obituary

### RUTHIE MAE BERRY

Ruthie Mae Berry, 80, of Lexington, passed away on Thursday, June 10, 2021. Funeral services will be held at Guiding Light Church in Lexington on Saturday, June 19 at 12:30 p.m. Visitation will be held on Friday, June 18 between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. at 300 West Madison Street in Durant. Funeral services are entrusted to Affordable Funeral Home of Durant.



**PLEASE BE INFORMED**

For those persons whom I, **THELMA RULE BULLOCK**, and the late Etha Rule Jordan, have written insurance policies for under **Security National Life Insurance Company**, that I, **THELMA RULE BULLOCK** am still your **Security National Life Insurance agent**.

Please contact me at 662-528-3006 or 314-578-8249 for any questions or concerns.

Thank you

## USDA Designates Eight Mississippi Counties as a Primary Natural Disaster Area

*Emergency Support to Producers in Surrounding Counties/Border State Also Available*

(Kosciusko, MS) — Administrator Zach Ducheneaux designated eight (8) counties in the State of Mississippi as the primary natural disaster area. Producers in Calhoun, Carroll, Chickasaw, Franklin, Holmes, Lawrence, Lee, and

Lincoln counties who suffered physical damage and losses caused by tornadoes that occurred March 25, 2021 through May 2, 2021, may be eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) emergency loans.

This natural disaster designation allows FSA to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation or the refinance of certain debts.

Producers in the contiguous Mississippi counties of Adams, Amite, Attala, Clay, Copiah, Grenada, Humphreys, Itawamba, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Leflore, Madison, Marion, Monroe, Montgomery, Pike, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Simpson, Union, Walthall, Webster, Wilkinson, Yalobusha, and Yazoo are also eligible to apply for emergency loans.

The deadline to apply for



**MISSISSIPPI SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER WORKSHOP**

Mississippi Small Business Development Center and McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement will host an in person or online webinar on Thursday, June 24 from noon to 1:00 p.m. at 112 Spring Street in Lexington. You can register with one of these options:

Virtual - <http://clients.mssbdc.org/reg.spx?event&event=28410011> or In-Person - <https://clients.mssbdc.org/reg.aspx?mode=event&event=28410012>.

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Julie Ellison...Gen. Manager

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES**

**In Holmes County - \$35.00**

**In Mississippi - \$40.00**

**Outside Mississippi - \$50.00**