



October 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

The Diabetes Advocacy Alliance (DAA) is a coalition of 25 diverse member organizations, representing patient, professional and trade associations, other non-profit organizations, and corporations, all united in the desire to change the way diabetes is viewed and treated in America. Since 2010, the DAA has worked to increase awareness of, and action on, the diabetes epidemic among legislators and policymakers. The organizations that comprise the DAA share a common goal of elevating diabetes on the national agenda so we may ultimately defeat diabetes.

The DAA urges you to pass a full 5-year reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program (SDP). Current SDP funding is scheduled to expire on December 11 unless Congress acts. As you may know, SDP is made up of two different programs: the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes Research (SPD-type 1) and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). We ask that you provide a 5-year reauthorization of SDP at \$150 million per program, per year.

The SDP-type 1, which is administered by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, advances important research into type 1 diabetes. Funding for SDP-type 1 has accelerated progress on an artificial pancreas, advanced therapies to reduce vision loss, and identified 50 genes that influence the risk of developing type 1 diabetes. The SDPI, which is administered by the Indian Health Service, provides funding to over 400 treatment and education programs available to American Indians and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN). AI/AN communities have the highest prevalence of diabetes in the United States, and these programs help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in these communities. SDPI programs have successfully reduced A1c levels, LDL cholesterol levels, and amputations in AI/AN populations.

Since September 2019, the SDP has experienced 5 short-term extensions that have ranged from several weeks to several months. These short-term extensions have not

been beneficial for SDP because short-term funding has resulted in interruptions of important research and cuts in services. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has made a long-term reauthorization even more important. Research shows that people with type 1 diabetes are 3.5 times more likely to die in the hospital due to COVID-19 than those without diabetes. Long-term research funding is critical to understanding why people with type 1 diabetes are at greater risk from COVID-19. The pandemic has also been harmful to SDPI programs. In the past six months, approximately 1 in 5 SDPI programs have reported employee furloughs, including healthcare workers. Roughly 25 percent of SDPI programs have reported delays in the purchase of medical equipment needed to treat and monitor diabetes. Additional short-term extensions during the current pandemic will result in further cuts to these important services.

Given the current crisis, stable funding of SDP is necessary to ensure that the program can deliver on important research and prevention services. **We ask that you pass a 5-year reauthorization of SDP at \$150 million per program, per year.**

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. The DAA looks forward to engaging with you on this and other issues important to people living with diabetes. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Diabetes Association
Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists
Endocrine Society
Livongo
National Kidney Foundation
Novo Nordisk Inc.
Omada Health
WW (Formerly Weight Watchers)
YMCA of the USA