

December 14, 2020

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

Dear Leader McConnell,

On behalf of the Endocrine Society, the world's largest professional organization of endocrinologists, I am writing to urge you to pass the long-term extension of the Special Diabetes Program and other health extenders agreed upon by a bipartisan group of committee leaders last week. This agreement ensures that critically important programs funding research on type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes prevention for American Indians and Alaska Natives will receive sustainable long-term funding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you know, the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) is part of a set of vital healthcare programs that will expire on December 18th. On Friday, a bipartisan, bicameral group of committee leaders announced agreement on a long-term extension of SDP which was included in the *No Surprises Act*. This agreement would fund SDP at its' current levels through FY 2024. The Endocrine Society strongly supports this long-term extension of SDP because it will ensure viable funding for a program that has endured six short-term extensions since September 2019. As you consider an end-of-year funding bill, we urge your support of the bipartisan agreement. The long-term extension of SDP is critical to maintaining the program's success and would benefit the 122 million people in the country with diabetes or pre-diabetes.

SDP is made up of two programs – the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). Even under normal circumstances, short-term extensions have hurt SDP. Short-term funding jeopardizes the viability of SDP resulting in interruptions on important research and cuts in services. A short-term extension of SDP during the current COVID-19 pandemic is even more harmful. Long-term research funding is necessary to provide stability to the program and critical to providing opportunity to research why people with type 1 diabetes are at greater risk from COVID-19. A long-term extension is also necessary to support SDPI. 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.



The bipartisan agreement reached last week ensures that SDP will be funded for the next 4 years providing long-term certainty during the current crisis. We urge your support to pass the long-term extension of SDP included in the *No Surprises Act*.

If you have any questions, please have your staff contact the Endocrine Society's Director of Advocacy & Policy Rob Goldsmith at rgoldsmith@endocrine.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Hammer".

Gary D. Hammer, MD, PhD
President
Endocrine Society