

Testimony of Isabelle Levesque

Age 10, JDRF Children's Congress Delegate

From Arundel, Maine

At the Hearing entitled:

"Diabetes Research: Improving Lives on the Path to a Cure"

Wednesday, July 15th, 2015, at 2:15 p.m.

Before the

United States Senate Special Committee on Aging

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G-50

Washington, D.C.

Thank you Chairman Collins and Senator McCaskill for inviting me to testify today. My name is Isabelle Levesque; I am ten years old and live in Arundel, Maine.

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, or T1D, when I was two years old.

My diagnosis was the start of a very different childhood. My mom and dad began a routine of ten to twelve finger pricks and six insulin shots each day, to keep my blood sugar in a healthy range. As of today, I have pricked my finger over 28,000 times, changed my pump site over 1,400 times and changed my sensor over 400 times. Can you imagine having to stick a needle into your skin 30,000 times in just 8 short years?

My family says that I am a happy child, but it's hard when you have to deal with diabetes every day. Type 1 diabetes is something you can never stop thinking about. I constantly have to put my life on pause to test my blood sugar. This can happen at any time: during my favorite movie, at school, when I'm swimming, or in the middle of a soccer or softball game. Sometimes, I even have to come out of a game to recover from low blood sugar, when I feel my team needs me the most, it is so frustrating! Cold weather activities are difficult as well because I don't always feel my low blood sugars when playing in the snow. I have been as low as 26 and didn't even know it until my parents had me check.

I'm here as a JDRF Children's Congress Delegate because I need your help. I want to see a cure for diabetes in my lifetime, and all of my friends here today do too. My family and I have spent the last eight years fighting for it, and we need Congress to continue fighting with us by funding research through the Special Diabetes Program (SDP).

My family and I work hard to raise funds for T1D research and to teach my community about this difficult disease. We do our part. My walk team, Strides for Isabelle, has been the top fundraising team in Maine for five out of the last seven years. I am proud to say we have raised over \$100,000. Also, last summer, I helped organize a concert, which I played my guitar in, to increase my community's understanding of the impact of diabetes.

The money we've raised has gone towards research into new treatments for type 1 diabetes, and hopefully will one day find a cure.

From this research has come technology that has made it easier to live with diabetes. One technology I use to track and manage my blood sugar is called a continuous glucose monitor, or CGM. I've been wearing a CGM since I was three years old.

Before I had a CGM, it was really hard for my mom and dad to know if my blood sugar was high or low, so they pricked my finger constantly throughout the day and used a test strip to check. For a three-year-old, and even now, the CGM has made a huge difference.

Although this device has helped me to stay healthy, there is so much more to be done, and a cure is still needed.

When I grow up, I want to be a teacher. To help make this dream of mine a reality, it's important that Congress continues supporting T1D research.

Thank you.