

March 23, 2011

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee:

On behalf of the American Diabetes Association, I am writing to express the Association's support for **Senate Bill 1178, "An Act Concerning the Care and Treatment of Students with Diabetes While at School."**

The care of a student with diabetes typically requires management during the school day. This means monitoring of blood glucose (sugar) levels and the administering of insulin. Blood glucose levels that are well managed help young people avoid the dangerous short-term complications of blood glucose levels that are too high or too low, stave off the long-term complications of diabetes, and feel better and be more productive at school and at play. Accordingly, students with diabetes need a supportive environment to help them take care of their diabetes during the school day.

Unfortunately, despite schools' obligations to provide care, some families in Connecticut are encountering problems with their children not having access to the assistance they need for regular and/or emergency care. While the school nurse plays a key role and is the most appropriate person in the school setting to provide care for a student with diabetes, not all schools have a full-time nurse. Even when a nurse is assigned to a school full-time, he or she will not always be available during the school day, during extracurricular activities, or on field trips. And the fiscal crisis makes it difficult for school districts to consider expanding their nursing staff.

Senate Bill 1178 helps to address these issues by allowing existing school staff to be trained in the routine and emergency care needs of students with diabetes for those times when a school nurse is not available. This is already allowed in most other states, and the American Diabetes Association has prepared training materials that can be utilized at no cost for this purpose. The care provided could include checking blood glucose, administering insulin, or, in the case of an emergency, administering glucagon. The American Diabetes Association and health care professionals specializing in diabetes endorse training school personnel to provide this care (when a school nurse is not available) as the best – and safest – solution (see related attachment).

Finally, in addition to the provisions described above, Senate Bill 1178 would also encourage allowing students who have the skills and maturity to self-manage their diabetes to be able to do so. This way these students can address the management of their diabetes in a more timely fashion, miss less class time, and create less of a burden upon the school nurse's time.

The Association believes this legislation makes smart use of existing staff resources, while better protecting the health and safety of students with diabetes, and thus we urge the committee's support for Senate Bill 1178. Thank you for your consideration of the needs of children with diabetes.

Sincerely,



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Diabetes Information

call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
online www.diabetes.org
The Association gratefully accepts gifts through your will.

The Mission of the American

Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

Safe at School Statement of Principles

Diabetes must be managed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Effective diabetes management during the many hours a child with diabetes spends at school and school-related activities is vital to the short- and long-term health of a child living with diabetes.

Effective diabetes management is crucial:

- for the immediate safety of students with diabetes;
- for the long-term health of students with diabetes;
- to ensure that students with diabetes are ready to learn and to participate fully in school activities; and
- to minimize the possibility that diabetes-related emergencies will disrupt classroom activities.

Such management requires a team effort that includes school personnel, the student with diabetes, the student's parents/guardians, and the family's health care providers. The undersigned organizations endorse the following principles to ensure diabetes is properly managed whenever a child with diabetes is present at school or a school-related activity.

1. All school staff members who have responsibility for a student with diabetes should receive training that provides a basic understanding of the disease and the student's needs, how to identify medical emergencies, and which school staff members to contact with questions or in case of an emergency.
2. The school nurse holds a primary role of coordinating, monitoring, and supervising the care of a student with diabetes. However, in addition to any full- or part-time school nurse, a small group of school staff members should receive training from a qualified health care professional in routine and emergency diabetes care so that a staff member is always available for younger or less-experienced students who require assistance with their diabetes management (e.g., administering insulin, checking their blood glucose, choosing appropriate food) and for all students with diabetes in case of an emergency (including administration of glucagon). These staff members should be school personnel who have volunteered to do these tasks and do not need to be health care professionals.
3. Children possessing the necessary skills and maturity to do so should be permitted to self-manage their disease in the classroom or wherever they are in conjunction with a school-related activity. Such self-management should include monitoring blood glucose and responding to blood glucose levels with needed food and medication while utilizing appropriate safety protocols.

Organizations endorsing the Safe at School Statement of Principles

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists
American Association of Diabetes Educators
American Diabetes Association
American Dietetic Association
Children with Diabetes
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
Lawson Wilkins Pediatric Endocrine Society
Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society