



March 7, 2016

The Honorable Terry Gerratana, Co-Chair
The Honorable Matthew Ritter, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Public Health
Connecticut General Assembly

Dear Senator Gerrantana, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee:

We are writing to urge passage of Raised House Bill 5536 An Act Concerning a Diabetes Action Plan which would require development of a comprehensive, statewide Diabetes Action Plan in Connecticut. We thank you and your committee for consideration of this important legislation.

HB 5536 amends Connecticut's existing Chronic Disease Report which represents a critical step that is needed to improve the state's ability to control and treat diabetes now and in the future. **Left unchecked, diabetes has the potential to bankrupt Connecticut's health care system.**

According to the Institute for Alternative Futures, an estimated 369,100 individuals in Connecticut are currently living with diabetes. Diabetes is estimated to cost Connecticut approximately \$3.6 billion in medical and non-medical expenses. Without important efforts like that proposed in House Bill 5536, more than 477,000 people, 12.93% of the population, are expected to be living with diabetes in another ten years at an estimated cost of \$4.7 billion.

The adoption of a statewide, comprehensive Diabetes Action Plan is a simple and inexpensive way for the State to strike an important blow in the war against diabetes. Similar plans have been adopted and are in effect in 18 other states.

HB 5536 is a vital step that can be a catalyst for the development of new and innovative approaches for addressing this terrible disease. It will encourage cooperation and coordination among departments of Connecticut state government to **develop a strategic plan for action against diabetes.** And most important is the fact that many thousands of Connecticut citizens can be positively impacted through improved planning and coordination of state efforts to administer prevention and health care programs throughout the state.

The National Volunteer Diabetes Leadership Council is a non-profit patient advocacy organization. Its membership consists of past lay volunteer leadership and officers of national volunteer health organizations such as the American Diabetes Association. We seek to improve the burden of diabetes on all people with diabetes and their families through encouraging public policy and improved outcomes around diabetes.

We stand ready to offer testimony, additional public comment or information to help in this very important and critical effort. Please feel free to contact NDVLC if we can offer any additional information.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments and we hope you will support HB 5536 moving out of committee.

Sincerely,

Larry Smith
President, NDVLC
Chair of the Board 2006
American Diabetes Association

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