American Diabetes Association.

Testimony of the American Diabetes Association in Support of House Bill 5266 – Medicaid Coverage for Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) and the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)

Thank you Chairman Ritter, Chairwoman Gerratana, and Committee Members for the opportunity to testify. My name is Stephen Habbe, and I am the Advocacy Director for the American Diabetes Association. I am here to convey the Association's support for House Bill 5266 regarding Medicaid coverage for diabetes. The American Diabetes Association is the largest voluntary health association serving all people with diabetes, with a mission to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

There are nearly 350,000 people with diabetes in Connecticut, including an estimated 70,000 people enrolled on Medicaid. And there are even greater numbers of people with prediabetes. People with prediabetes have elevated blood glucose levels and are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

This legislation is important because diabetes is not a victimless disease. It is a leading source of complications that can be disabling or deadly – including blindness, kidney failure, lower limb amputations, heart disease, and stroke. In addition to the personal toll this disease takes, diabetes also takes a costly toll on Connecticut with $3 billion in annual medical costs and $1 billion in indirect costs (such as sick days).

This legislation seeks to address critical care gaps through the addition of coverage for Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) and the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). Diabetes Self-Management Education prepares people with diabetes to properly self-manage their diabetes given the importance of self-management in ensuring beneficial outcomes. The Diabetes Prevention Program successfully helps people with prediabetes lower their risk for developing diabetes through group sessions and related maintenance activities focusing on healthy eating and increased physical activity. The American Diabetes Association views both of these programs as critical, evidence-based approaches that keep people with diabetes healthy and prevent diabetes among those with prediabetes. These services are recommended in our Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes, which are widely referenced in the medical community.

Regarding the text of the bill, the Association suggests in Section 1 of the bill that the phrase beginning with "diabetes prevention services" be replaced by "a diabetes prevention program that meets the standards of the National Diabetes Prevention Program, as established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."

Legislatures across the country are revisiting what they are doing to turn the tide on diabetes given the increasing scope of this disease. The Association would appreciate your support for House Bill 5266 to make an important step forward in stopping the devastation caused by diabetes.

Contact: Stephen Habbe, Advocacy Director
shabbe@diabetes.org