

Testimony in support of HB6237: An Act Adopting The Recommendations of the DIABETES COUNCIL.

My name is Pamela Howard. I am a Nurse Practitioner and Certified Diabetes Educator at Norwalk Hospital. I am providing testimony in behalf of the people with diabetes of Connecticut and also have Medicaid. I am advocating for Medicaid to cover Diabetes Self-Management Education/Training.

Diabetes is controlled by food, exercise and medication. The person with diabetes is required to make daily decisions that impact their ability to control their diabetes. The more that the person knows the better they are able to make appropriate choices. Diabetes Self-Management /Training helps the person to learn the skills to manage their diabetes and prevent the complications associated with it. Diabetes education is a missing piece for a CT Medicaid patient to successfully manage their condition.

Diabetes Education is mandated for all Connecticut based insurance plans and it is also covered by Medicare.

I daily see patients and their families to educate them on managing their diabetes. I ask them to demonstrate to me how they are taking their insulin, or testing their blood and making food choices.

I have observed and corrected patients taking the insulin in inappropriate sites and at the wrong time. I have had a patient who was taking two different types of insulins. They work at different times and are not interchangeable. He had them mixed up and was taking them at the wrong times. He worked in construction often climbing ladders. He was at a great risk of having hypoglycemia(low blood glucose) which could increase his risk of falling and getting hurt.

I have had patients who have stopped taking their medication because they thought that the diabetes went away. They did not want to share that with their provider because they thought that they would be mad.

Blood glucose monitoring is supposed to help the person understand if their current treatment plan is working or not. The blood glucose will fluctuate throughout the day. I have had patients check their blood glucose but not understand what the results mean. Once they were educated they could see on a day to day basis how their food and lifestyle choices are impacting their diabetes. They were then able to make accurate decisions and prevent the complications.

Many people believe that as long as they feel okay then they are okay. Diabetes can cause complications such as kidney problems requiring dialysis, blindness, heart attacks, strokes and amputations. It is a case of what they do not know will hurt them.

I urge you to support this bill to provide Medicaid recipients coverage for Diabetes Self-Management Education/Training.

Sincerely,

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