

Testimony of

**Asa Kelly
Age 16, JDRF Children's Congress Delegate
Charlotte, NC**

At the Hearing entitled

“Type 1 Diabetes Research: Real Progress and Real Hope for a Cure”

Wednesday, June 24, 2009, 9:00 a.m.

Before the

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Good morning. I am Asa Kelly. I am sixteen years old and come from Charlotte, North Carolina. Unlike my friends Hannah and Patrick, I am relatively new to the diabetes world. Just over a year ago on May 29, 2008, I went to the doctor because I was tired and thirsty all of the time. The doctor ran some tests, which showed my blood sugar was 362, about three times the normal. I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and was immediately admitted to the hospital.

At the hospital, I learned about the different types of insulin I would have to take until there is a cure. The Diabetes Educator taught me how to check my sugar, draw up insulin and give myself a shot. She also taught me the warning signs of high and low blood sugar and how to treat them. From then on I realized that I was in control of my health and that diabetes is very manageable – a little scary but manageable. At first when I was discharged I was scared about taking my insulin without someone constantly watching me, but I quickly learned.

Type 1 diabetes called for some major changes in my life. Testing blood sugar many times daily, counting carbohydrates, and checking ketones are just a few things that I go through. Finding a cure would relieve a lot of the stress it takes me and others to be healthy. I could focus on my schoolwork better and not have to step out of class to deal with a bout of hypoglycemia, which makes my teachers nervous.

A cure would also take a load off my parents. My parents trust the workers at my church, my friends who I hand out with, and my school to take care of me because they are not always present to do so.

Diabetes is a disability, but I am not disabled. Many people treat me different and feel like I have to be watched more often. But the truth is I am an active teenager, a diehard Carolina Panthers and UNC Tar Heel Fan, a scholar, and a good friend. One of my major goals in life is to go to UNC Chapel Hill to become a doctor. I am not going to let diabetes ruin my life. But I deep-down hope that I don't have to contend with the daily challenges for much longer.

I ask you as members of congress to support research issues to find a cure. Over three million Americans suffer from this disease and many of them are children and teens just like me and my friends here. A cure would give us freedom to carry on a normal life without taking a break to check our blood or have a snack. I want Congress to feel the urgency of this issue that it is a daily struggle, not just something you can take a break from doing. It is our lifestyle and all choices are made due to it.

Please continue to support research efforts to find a cure. A cure would truly change my life, my family's life and the lives of almost everyone in this room today. Thank you!