

**Testimony of**

**J. Patrick Lacher III  
Age 13, JDRF Children's Congress Delegate  
South Glastonbury, CT**

**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**

Senator Collins and Senator Lieberman, thank you for inviting me to testify today. My name is Patrick Lacher, I am 13 years old, and I have had juvenile diabetes for over three years.

My family and I decided to participate in the 2005 JDRF Walk to Cure Diabetes near my hometown of South Glastonbury, Connecticut, to support my dad who has had juvenile diabetes since he was nineteen. Little did I know that just two weeks later, I would be diagnosed with juvenile diabetes.

The next two days became the hardest of my life. I had a crash course in how to manage my diabetes. The last thing in the mind of a 9-year old is managing diabetes, but I had to accumulate all that knowledge practically overnight.

Even though I had watched my dad take care of his diabetes, I never realized how much of my day would be spent dealing with this disease. Though over time it has become easier, I can never cease to pay attention to diabetes and the daily challenges it brings. When I go to a friend's house, even for just a few hours, I have to have a plan. I have to know how active I'm going to be, what I'm going to eat and how both will affect me. I have to bring my blood sugar tester and other supplies, such as juice, snacks or glucose tablets so I'm always prepared for anything that can happen. My bag that carries all these items is like my right arm; I can never leave it behind. All this responsibility has been mine since I was a 9 year old.

There are many reasons why a cure is so important to me. The most important reason is that it would help not just me, but the millions of other people living with this disease. Just think - if we could improve the lives of millions of children and adults around the world, why wouldn't we? Curing diabetes would also save our country a lot of money since the cost of diabetic supplies and healthcare is enormous.

Another reason a cure is important to me is that it would make my life a whole lot easier. I would be able to sleep over at a friend's house without worrying about my blood sugar – not to mention how concerned my parents are when I'm away from home. I would be able to eat just as much as my friends do at birthday parties, and I would even be able to order dessert all the time like my little brother does. I can't wait for that day! I wouldn't have to carry a bag with me everywhere I go. I could be free.

Like Hannah, I am doing my part to help find a cure. With the support of my family and friends, I had over 100 walkers on my team in the 2008 Walk to Cure Diabetes. I've also spoken at the Walk and other JDRF functions to help people understand just how difficult it is to live with diabetes and how they can help.

From the day I was diagnosed, I always knew in my heart and believed passionately that we would cure this, and now, with all the advances I've seen in just the past three years, I know a cure is within our grasp. That is what keeps me vigilant every day so that my body is ready when a cure is found.

It is my hope that one day I can tell my children and grandchildren "Can you believe I had diabetes?" and they'll say, "What's diabetes?" And then I can tell them about how Congress and JDRF worked together to fund research for the cure.

Thank you for letting me share my story with you. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.