

Testimony of Kerry Morgan

**Age 17, JDRF Children's Congress Delegate
from Glen Allen, Virginia**

At the Hearing entitled:

"Transforming Lives Through Diabetes Research"

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Before the

Senate Committee on

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C.

Good afternoon, Senator Collins, Senator Lieberman, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am Kerry Morgan from Glen Allen, Virginia and I was diagnosed with diabetes thirteen years ago, when I was four years old.

Unfortunately, diabetes wasn't new to me when I was diagnosed. My older sister was diagnosed with the disease when she was four. Shortly after her diagnosis, I was enrolled in a clinical trial for first-degree relatives of people with type 1 to determine if they were at risk for developing the disease. On the trial, I received daily insulin injections in hopes to avoid or delay development of diabetes.

It didn't work. Sometimes clinical trials don't. I was formally diagnosed with type 1 diabetes one year later.

Then in what seemed like a flash, ten years passed. Ten years filled with thousands of insulin injections, finger sticks, tubing changes, endless carbohydrate counting and worry. Ten years of toting around an awful green fanny pack containing the vital necessities for everyday life. Even with my best efforts I still have days with severe high and low blood sugars. My family and I hoped, just like the millions of those impacted with this disease do, for a better way to control this.

I was 14 when I enrolled in a clinical trial that was testing a continuous glucose monitoring system. This ingenious device, which I named "my little buddy", gave me instant knowledge of what my blood sugar was doing, and where it was going. While on this trial my A1c dropped from an 8 to a 7. This technology made living with the disease not only easier, but gave me hope that it was TRULY possible to manage diabetes better.

It wasn't a cure, but it was more than I had before.

Living with diabetes is a daily struggle. It creates this cloud of fear and doubt. Thoughts of blood sugars and carbs are always on my mind. I'm constantly asking myself, "Am I *okay*?" I always have to remember snacks and extra supplies to ensure that, in case of incident, I'm covered because things can get scary quickly. I've had my pump stop working while out of town, unprompted by dropping it or submerging it in water.

I don't just worry about it now, I worry about my future. Diabetes never takes a break, so, neither can I or my family.

Then, last October, I enrolled in a clinical trial testing artificial pancreas technology. For two days, I was admitted into a hospital where they tested the closed loop artificial pancreas system. After participating in clinical research since I was three years old, I can honestly say the closed loop artificial pancreas trial was the most amazing experience of my entire life and holds so much promise for people living with this disease.

For two days, I had perfect control of my blood sugar levels. Two days of living with this technology provided me with a vision of what life could be like: Life with FAR LESS fear of complications both short and long term. Creation of an artificial pancreas is within reach, I know it, I've been a part of it, and I will do all I can to get it into the hands of people living with diabetes, and I hope you will too.

So, on the day the artificial pancreas is finally approved and released, people with this disease can say, "Diabetes: There's an APP for that."

Thank you, Members of the Committee, for all you do for those living with diabetes, and working to make the artificial pancreas technology available to all those living with this disease.