

My name is Lauren Stanford. I'm 13 years old and live in Plymouth, Massachusetts. I've had diabetes for eight years.

Before I tell you about my story, I want you to think about something. In this room right now, you see 150 kids with juvenile diabetes – that's 150 pairs of hands. Consider that, on average, each of these kids needs to prick their finger and draw blood for a glucose test six times a day. Add to that the fact that we've each had juvenile diabetes for an average of five years. If you do the math, you will see that means that these 150 pairs of hands have pricked their fingers more than 1.5 million times and have spent over \$2 million on just their test strips. If you look out into this hearing room, you will see the evidence of 1.5 million times that diabetes has invaded a life. And we are just a snapshot of the millions of kids who suffer with diabetes. So take my story that I am about to share with you and multiply it, just like we did those finger pricks, and you will begin to understand the toll this disease takes on our world.

My story is about always working to win and finding out that with diabetes, in the end, you can almost never beat it. I am an A student. I compete on swim and tennis teams and am an expert skier. That's because I expect the best from myself. For seven years, it was the same with my diabetes. I was the 'model patient'.

But last fall something happened; I got sick of it. I wanted so bad to be like my other teenage friends who were free to worry about nothing more than boys and movies and fun. I wanted to buy a slushie without having to do algebra. So I started to lie to my mom, skipping blood checks and making up numbers. It got worse, and pretty soon I was skipping insulin doses, too. I knew I was in trouble, but I couldn't stop. I'd go to bed at night and say "tomorrow will be a new day. I'll try hard and it will be fine". But the next morning, I just couldn't go back to my life with diabetes. I was sick, but in a strange way I felt free. So I kept lying and not taking care of myself. On October 30th I collapsed and was rushed to Children's Hospital in Boston where I was put in the ICU. I could have died. Diabetes almost got me.

You might ask what would make a smart girl do such a stupid thing? I was completely burned out on diabetes. I felt like I had been through a medical test every few hours for the past seven years, and I just couldn't stand the endlessness of it anymore. It seemed like as hard as I tried, there were always days I was high or low. I couldn't be perfect.

I now know that this is not the way to win this battle. I have made myself a vow to be brave and to not give in to this unforgiving disease. And I ask you, Members of Congress, to do the same. When it is tough to make a decision about supporting additional funding for diabetes research or expanding the current stem cell research policy, think of me and all of the kids in this room today. Don't give in because it's hard; rather, like I had to do, face the hard work and difficult decisions that will lead me, the kids in this room, and the million of people around the world to a cure for diabetes. That's the only way we will win this battle – with your help. We kids cannot beat it on our own. We need you and your support.