

TESTIMONY



Testimony
By
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On Behalf of

**Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International
Regarding Federal Support of Juvenile Diabetes Research
Before the
Senate Permanent Subcommittee on
Investigations**

Hi. My name is Caroline Rowley and I am from Houston, Texas.

I've always heard of bad things happening to people, but I never thought anything bad would happen to me. Then all of a sudden I was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes. I was in kindergarten. My entire life changed and being a kindergartner was suddenly full of drawing blood from my fingers and taking lots of shots every day. I couldn't believe this was happening to me.

In 2nd grade, a blind woman came to speak at my school's chapel about guard dogs. I begged my teacher to ask her if she had diabetes, because she talked about taking shots to stay alive. She was diabetic. When I got home, I asked my mom if we would get a new dog or train our dog, Chase, to be my "eyes" when I went blind.

My mom sat me down, and with tears in her eyes, she told me we were going to do everything in our power to keep me from getting complications ... that is why we have to manage my diabetes so intensely. This was our first discussion about complications, but certainly would not be our last.

After having diabetes for almost 5 years, my doctor ran a routine test to be sure my kidneys were ok. She told my mom we wouldn't hear back from her, it was just routine. Two weeks later, my doctor called and asked me to rerun the test. I took the test 3 or 4 times, but every time the result was the same.

Protein in my urine – a sign of the beginning stages of kidney disease. I didn't want to believe it...neither did my mom or dad. Now, in addition to wearing an insulin pump 24/7 and pricking my fingers, I have to take another drug each and every day for the rest of my life. When is all this going to stop?

I always thought that if I ever got complications that I would be grown, that I would still have my youth to be normal, but diabetes has stolen my childhood and forced me to grow up. I worry about having a seizure, going blind or losing my kidneys. The top ten music countdown, or the latest fashions at the GAP - these things just don't seem that important in my life.

Most people think of complications as something that happens to older people or after you've had diabetes for a very long time. I'm here to tell you **that is just not the truth**. Look around this room ... there is no way for you to know how many of these children are already experiencing problems with their kidneys or their eyes.

Because diabetes is silent on the outside we look healthy ... on the inside a war is raging our bodies, a war we cannot fight alone.

Every day I live with many fears, every night I sit in bed and pray for a cure as long as I can stay awake, hoping God will hear my prayer. It is my responsibility to control my diabetes every day and try to keep my body from further complications, but you control whether or not the researchers have a chance to cure diabetes. You can give me back my life and I will not have to fear when or if I'll be blind or on dialysis.

My life has already been shortened 15 years just because I was diagnosed with diabetes. I want a full life like the one most of you and your loved ones have been able to live, long.... and not a life full of pain and complications.

I need your help in finding a cure.

Please, please Promise to Remember Me

and all children with diabetes.

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