

December 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Endocrine Society, the world's largest professional organization of endocrinologists, I am writing to urge you to pass a long-term reauthorization of the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) before it expires December 18. This critically important program funds vital research on type 1 diabetes and important programs that prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

As you know, the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) is part of a set of vital healthcare programs that are soon set to expire. SDP is made up of two programs – the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). Congress is currently considering a short-term extension of SDP as part of a Continuing Resolution, which will extend the program to December 18th. This will be the sixth short-term extension of SDP since September 2019. As you consider the omnibus funding bill, we urge you to pass a long-term extension rather than another short-term continuation of SDP to maintain the program's success and benefit to the 122 million people in the country with diabetes or pre-diabetes. A short-term continuation of less than two years would not be sufficient during this current crisis.

It is important to understand that even under normal circumstances, short-term extensions have hurt SDP. Short-term funding jeopardizes the viability of SDP resulting in interruptions on important research and cuts in services. A short-term extension of SDP during the current COVID-19 pandemic is even more harmful. Long-term research funding is necessary to provide stability to the program and critical to providing opportunity to research why people with type 1 diabetes are at greater risk from COVID-19. A long-term extension is also necessary to support SDP. In the past six months, approximately 1 in 5 SDPI programs have reported employee furloughs, including healthcare workers. Roughly 25 percent of SDPI programs have reported delays in the purchase of medical equipment needed to treat and monitor diabetes. Additional short-term extensions during the current



pandemic will result in further cuts to these important services and cause further uncertainty for researchers that may result in staff cuts and delays in important research.

When Congress passes short-term extensions, it creates a false sense of security that programs will continue to be funded while members work to reach consensus on other issues. However, passing another short-term extension of SDP would be extremely harmful to the program, especially during this current crisis. We urge you to pass a long-term (five-year) extension of SDP at \$150 million per program, per year.

We appreciate your consideration of this important issue. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact the Endocrine Society's Director of Advocacy & Policy Rob Goldsmith at rgoldsmith@endocrine.org.

Sincerely,

Gary D. Hammer, MD, PhD
President
Endocrine Society