

September 13, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

The Endocrine Society is writing to urge you to reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) before it expires at the end of September. We greatly appreciate the support Congress has shown for this program and continued investment is needed to improve the lives of individuals living with diabetes and to better understand the cause of the disease.

Founded in 1916, the Endocrine Society is the world's oldest, largest, and most active organization devoted to research on hormones and the clinical practice of endocrinology. The Society works to foster a greater understanding of endocrinology among the general public and practitioners of complementary medical disciplines, and to promote the interests of all endocrinologists at the international and national scientific research and health policy levels of government. Endocrinologists are at the core of solving the most pressing health problems of our time, from diabetes and obesity to infertility, bone health, and hormone-related cancers.

Funding for the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2017. The SDP was created in 1997 to advance research for type 1 diabetes and to address the disproportionate burden of type 2 diabetes on American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN). Through this funding, the Special Type 1 Program has advanced research in islet cell transplantation, beta-cell therapy, and innovative therapies like the artificial pancreas. The SDP for Type 2 Diabetes has also shown great success by helping AIAN prevent and manage type 2 diabetes resulting in significant reductions in A1c and amputation as well as improvements in blood pressure and kidney function.

The renewal of the SDP and appropriation of \$300 million for the program for the next two years will ensure that it continues to improve the lives of those Americans already suffering from diabetes and preventing the numbers of those diagnosed with diabetes from growing. Nearly 30 million people suffer from diabetes with an additional 86 million diagnosed with prediabetes. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease and blindness in working-age adults and is also a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. The SDP program is reducing the long-term health care expenditures related to complications from diabetes and continued investment is essential to conducting clinical trials and planning next steps for research programs that will play an important role in helping to better treat, prevent, and ultimately cure diabetes.

Thank you in advance for your support for this lifesaving program. It is vital that we continue to address the growing diabetes epidemic in America. The evidence-based Special Diabetes Program has



demonstrated an ability to improve outcomes, reduce costs, and continue critical research to find a cure.

Please do not hesitate to contact Meredith Dyer, Director, Health Policy, at [mdyer@endocrine.org](mailto:mdyer@endocrine.org), if we may provide any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Byrd Keenan".

Barbara Byrd Keenan, FASAE, CAE  
Chief Executive Officer  
Endocrine Society