

**PENNSYLVANIA**  
**HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**  
**HEARING ON H.B. 2128**

**TESTIMONY**  
**PRESENTED BY**  
**GARY GRAHAM**  
**DIABETES PATIENT ADVOCATE**

**April 2, 1998**

**Good Morning Chairman Gannon and Committee members.  
Thank you for this opportunity to tell you what recent advances in  
medical research have meant to me.**

**I am a native Pennsylvanian, currently living in Dauphin County. I  
am just one of the 1.1 million Pennsylvanians suffering with  
diabetes.**

**The most common types of diabetes are:**

**Type 1 - Juvenile onset or insulin-dependent,**

**Type 2 - Adult on-set which typically can be non-insulin dependent  
and**

**Gestational Diabetes - which can occur during pregnancy.**

**As you know, high blood sugar levels can hurt different parts of the  
body resulting in nerve damage, kidney disease, eye damage, heart  
disease, tooth and gum disease and infections that frequently lead to  
amputation.**

**Some quick facts:**

**□ An estimated 1.1 million children and adults in Pennsylvania  
have diabetes, which is incurable. Half of them don't know they  
have diabetes.**

**□ Diabetes is the third leading cause of death by disease in  
Pennsylvania and more than 11,500 Pennsylvanians die each year.**

**I was first diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes 12 years ago. As an  
individual with Type 2 diabetes, my body may produce insulin, but  
is unable to use it properly, which is why I must give myself three (3)  
shots of insulin per day. Even with the injections, it was difficult to  
control my blood sugar levels.**

**Recently, my doctor put me on a new FDA approved drug which changes the way my body uses insulin and it has lowered my blood sugar levels.**

**In some Type 2 diabetics this new treatment may result in reduction or even elimination of insulin or other oral medications. But the most important thing is that you have better blood sugar control.**

**Continued medical research is not only a quality of life issue for patients, but new drug therapies coupled with education, nutrition and lifestyle changes will dramatically reduce healthcare costs.**

**Currently, the direct (medical care) and indirect (disability, work loss, premature mortality) cost of diabetes in Pennsylvania is more than \$6.7 billion annually.**

- In Pennsylvania over 3,800 lower extremity amputations occur annually; cost per hospitalization is \$26,940.**
- In Pennsylvania over 1,000 new cases of end-stage renal disease related to diabetes are diagnosed each year; cost per hospitalization is \$38,700.**
- In Pennsylvania there are 937 new cases of diabetes related blindness diagnosed annually.**

**It's my hope and prayer, and I know you share my feelings, that continued genetic research that enhances quality of life, reduces more expensive hospital stays and invasive procedures, will some day lead to more effective treatment and perhaps even cures of diseases such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis, AIDS, Alzheimer's, ALS, cancer and many others.**

**I would ask that as you review legislation such as H.B. 2128 and others, that language be carefully crafted so that there is not an unintended negative impact on the future of biomedical research..**

**Thank you for your kind attention.**