
American Diabetes Association urges Congress to examine ravages of childhood obesity and Type 2 Diabetes

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) today applauded Chairman Chris Dodd (D-CT), Ranking Member Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and members of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families for holding a hearing on, "Childhood Obesity: The Declining Health of America's Next Generation." Appearing before the Committee was Francine Kaufman, M.D., a prominent pediatric endocrinologist, past president of the ADA, and a distinguished professor of Pediatrics and Communication at the University of Southern California.

Dr. Kaufman shared compelling information based on her first-hand observations and research as a clinician, about the dangerous rate of childhood obesity cases among children and young adults, and the strong correlation between type 2 diabetes and childhood obesity. According to Kaufman, "Children who are overweight, obese and unfit are at increased risk of developing high blood pressure, abnormal lipid levels, inflammation in their blood vessels and higher than normal blood sugar levels. These disorders are precursors of diabetes and adult-onset cardiovascular disease."

Kaufman went on to illustrate that one in three children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes at some point in his or her life, and that this statistic is nearly one in two for children in minority communities. "Today, there is no doubt that obesity in youth, along with its associated medical conditions, is the major health challenge of this century," said Kaufman. "Despite the efforts of government and public health officials, the number of overweight and obese youth continues to increase. More needs to be done to combat the ever growing epidemics of obesity and diabetes."

Today, 23.6 million children and adults in the United States -- or nearly 8 percent of the population -- have diabetes. Diabetes is among the leading causes of death by disease in the United States. Since 1987, the death rate due to diabetes has increased by 45 percent, while the death rates due to heart disease, stroke, and cancer have declined.

The American Diabetes Association is the nation's premier voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy. The Association's mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. Founded in 1940, the Association provides services to hundreds of communities across the country. For more information please call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit www.diabetes.org. Information from both these sources is available in English and Spanish.



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