

Statement of Chairman Frank Pallone
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
“The Battle Against Diabetes: Progress Made; Challenges Unmet”
Subcommittee on Health
July 1, 2010

“I am pleased to call to order a hearing on our collective battle against diabetes, the progress we have made so far, and the challenges that remain.

“Over thirty years ago, Congress passed the National Diabetes Research and Education Act—the first significant legislation directed at coordinating and expanding the government’s research and prevention efforts related to diabetes. While we have made tremendous progress in understanding and treating diabetes, it remains a significant public health epidemic. It’s staggering to realize that over 23 million Americans have some form of diabetes today, and the number is growing. Even more troubling is that 57 million Americans are at serious risk for developing type 2 diabetes, including women with gestational diabetes.

“Until recently, kids were rarely diagnosed with anything but Type 1 diabetes. The increasing rate of childhood obesity is changing the face of diabetes though, and certainly not for the better. And as we will hear today from our esteemed panels, diabetes is a leading cause of heart disease, stroke, blindness and kidney failure.

“As is often the case, diabetes disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities. American Indians have the highest prevalence of diabetes nationwide-and Hispanics and African-Americans are close behind.

“Moreover, there is a clear economic cost. It has been estimated that over \$220 billion in medical expenses in 2007 can be attributed to diabetes.

“These are serious problems which need aggressive and innovative action. Today we will hear from two of our government witnesses from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, located at NIH, and the Centers for Disease Control. Both will speak to their agencies roles in doing landmark research and surveillance work related to diabetes, and how this information has been translated into more effective prevention and treatment strategies, including the development of key therapies and technologies.

“I should add that NIDDK has recently celebrated its 60th Anniversary conducting and supporting biomedical research to improve health care across the nation. NIDDK leads the Nation’s Federal commitment in research, education and health information dissemination with respect to diabetes, and supports investigators who continue to make strides in research toward understanding, preventing, and treating type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes. It is for these reasons that the Ranking Member,

Congressman Shimkus and I recently introduced a resolution honoring the NIDDK for its outstanding work. Congratulations to the NIDDK!

“Our second panel, comprised of leaders from the American Diabetes Association, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and National Indian Health Board, will also be able to shed light on the work they have done to maximize research translation to improve health outcomes.

“Innovative, exciting and collaborative work on diabetes research is taking place across the country in public private partnerships. I am proud that New Jersey’s life sciences industry continues to play a strong role in contributing to our ability to address the epidemic today and will do so in the future.”

###