

Testimony by

Elise Cataldo

Age 15 from Hooksett, New Hampshire

JDRF 2023 Children's Congress Delegate

At the Hearing entitled:

**“Accelerating Breakthroughs: How the Special Diabetes Program is Creating
Hope for those Living with Type 1 Diabetes”**

Wednesday, July 11, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Before the

United States Senate

Committee on Appropriations

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 106

Washington, D.C.

Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Senator Shaheen, and Members of the Committee – thank you for inviting me to speak with you today about my life with type 1 diabetes.

My name is Elise Cataldo. I am 15 years old, and I live in Hooksett, New Hampshire.

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was 18 months old. Many of my fellow delegates can remember a time without diabetes—I cannot. Life with diabetes is the only life I've ever known.

However, my life with diabetes today is drastically different than it was when I was diagnosed. Back then, we didn't have the same tools we have today. Continuous glucose monitors, like the one I am wearing today, were not yet widely adopted by the type 1 diabetes community. Insulin pumps with artificial pancreas technology were not yet available.

Thanks to brilliant researchers, clinical trial participants, advocates, JDRF, and the overwhelming support of Senators like you, the tools I have today are vastly superior. In fact, I currently use an insulin pump that has an algorithm called control IQ that gives me more insulin when I need it, and it decreases the amount of insulin I get to help prevent dangerous low blood sugars.

The Special Diabetes Program, or SDP funded the final clinical trial for this algorithm. That clinical trial led to its FDA approval—and my life is so much better because of it. I can sleep better at night—and so can my parents—because of SDP funded research.

I am not alone—I can guarantee *many* of my fellow delegates utilize this or other systems like it—and they were all helped in one way or another by the SDP.

Thank you for your past support of this critical program.

Today, I am incredibly proud to say that I live as close to a normal life as possible. I play many sports, including soccer; I spend time with my family; I go camping. In a few years, I hope to go to college, be a D1 athlete, and study psychology so that I can become a child life specialist.

But as normal as I look on the outside, type 1 diabetes is always in the back of my mind. It affects every decision I make, every day. When I'm playing soccer, I need to ensure my blood sugar is in the right range. If it's too high, I can become fatigued. If it's low, I can become disoriented and even pass out.

If this sounds like a lot for a 15-year-old to keep track of, you're right. It is!

Many Americans with diabetes have one more thing to keep track of: whether or not they can afford their insulin.

I am incredibly lucky that I am able to access the insulin I need. It makes me so sad that there are people just like me who have trouble affording insulin and have to make terrible decisions, like whether to buy groceries or insulin.

I hope that all the members of the Senate and the rest of Congress can work together to solve this problem. The diabetes community needs your help.

One day soon, I hope to live free from type 1 diabetes. You play a critical role in making that a reality. Please fund the SDP and continue to fight for me, the 163 kids here today, and the millions more in America affected by this disease.

Thank you for listening to my story and thank you for your support.