

Testimony of

Adriana Richard, age 16

From

Milton, Pennsylvania

At the Hearing entitled:

**“Redefining Reality: How the Special Diabetes Program is Changing the Lives of
Americans with Type 1 Diabetes”**

Wednesday, July 10, 2019, at 9:30 a.m.

Before the

United States Senate Special Committee on Aging

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 106

Washington, D.C.

Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Casey, Senators – thank you for asking me to speak here today.

My name is Adriana Richard. I am 16 years old and from a small town in central Pennsylvania called Milton.

I'm a proud member of the JDRF Central Pennsylvania Teen Task Force. Last year, we raised over \$10,000 with our JDRF One Walk team.

I wrote a book – “The Real T1D” – and started an Instagram account to share my T1D story because I'm one of many living with diabetes every day. I'm not the only one going through this.

I go to diabetes camp most summers – it's my favorite time of year because I'm not judged and I can be myself.

I am here today to share my voice as an advocate for people with T1D because I have been motivated by the struggles I have experienced.

See, I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was five years old. All I remember from my diagnosis was that my parents were scared for me. I am the oldest of four kids, and the only one in my family with diabetes.

In elementary school, I was sometimes teased for being different or for always being with the nurse. School is already a stressful environment and having diabetes only makes it more difficult.

I've gone through some hard times.

A few years ago, I was having really “bad lows” – which means my blood sugar was getting dangerously low. But the thing is: I didn't know it. I felt fine. I also had really bad highs. In fact, one especially bad time I had DKA or diabetic ketoacidosis – and was hospitalized. I felt really sick and was in a lot of pain. DKA is very serious as it can lead to a coma or worse.

I was constantly battling diabetes and managing my everyday life with no breaks. I was physically and emotionally exhausted - and basically suffering from burnout.

Thankfully, I've been able to manage T1D better over the last year, primarily since I got my Dexcom CGM. It catches my highs and lows before they get bad, and I can check my levels on my phone. It also alerts my parents, which is a huge relief because sometimes I miss the alarms on my phone when I'm asleep.

Before, I had to check my levels right before going to bed and hope that I wouldn't get too low during the night. Now, I feel much better when I wake up in the morning.

My life with T1D is easier with this technology, which is thanks in part to funding from the Special Diabetes Program.

That is why I am here to ask you to support the SDP. It needs to be renewed.

We're so close to finding cures for diabetes and if we stop research now, there's no way we will ever find it. Until then, we need the SDP for research to help our everyday lives with T1D – to help scientists and engineers invent things like CGMs that have changed my life.

In fact, after Children's Congress, I will be taking the driver's test to get my license. I am excited and my parents are, too, knowing that my CGM will help me more easily manage my blood sugar levels while I focus on navigating the roads in Milton.

Senators, people with T1D can do anything we set our minds too -- we just have extra responsibilities.

The research funded by SDP helps people like me – all of us here today – handle those responsibilities, and will ultimately give us a cure.

And I'm grateful that as a resident of Pennsylvania the cost of my insulin is zero dollars because it's fully covered as a life-sustaining medicine under Medicaid. Thank you, Senator Casey, for your interest in expanding this program broadly so that kids with diabetes in other states may also benefit.

Thank you all for listening to my story, and for your support of people with T1D.