

Testimony of Lorynn Watt

Age 17, JDRF 2017 Children's Congress Delegate

From Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

At the Hearing entitled:

“Progress Toward a Cure for Type 1 Diabetes: Research and the Artificial Pancreas”

Wednesday, July 26, 2017, 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 inviting me to talk with you today.

My name is Lorynn Watt, I am 17 years old, and this fall I will be a senior at Evergreen Community Charter School in Cresco, Pennsylvania.

When I was nine, I was diagnosed with type one diabetes. I remember sitting on my parents' bed, just about a week before Halloween, as my mom and stepdad told me that I had T1D. That day they loaded me into the car and took me to the hospital, where I'd learn how to care for myself.

At that point, I only knew about diabetes from an episode of Hannah Montana I saw just before I was diagnosed. That was it. What I did know was that I was scared, felt awful, and all of a sudden was living a life where I had to inject myself with insulin multiple times a day, even though I was horrified of needles.

Then at 14, I got a continuous glucose monitor (or CGM) and an insulin pump. It made my life so much easier. Now, all I need to do is look at my phone – which most kids my age do all the time – and I can see my blood sugar. It has been life-changing, and I hope this, the artificial pancreas, and other advances are small steps toward a cure.

I've heard every year since I was diagnosed that in five years there will be a cure. I've had this disease for almost eight years. Now, I'm no mathematician, but you can see that we are a bit behind schedule.

I believe that with your help we can have a cure.

After all, we already have come so far.

I know this because my biological father also had T1D. He wasn't in my life much. He didn't have great care – no pump or CGM or even ability to check his blood sugar every day.

So, he lost his foot, then his eyesight, and the use of his kidneys. He had to get a stent in his heart. And he died less than a year after my own T1D diagnosis, at just 38 years old.

I am here today asking you to support more funding for more research because no one should have to suffer and lose their life because of T1D.

I am here, inspired by his memory, and determined that none of the kids here today or sitting in a hospital room right now – scared – as they get their diagnosis, will have the same fate as my father.

With your help, I know we can do it. I know we can find a cure.

Thank you.