



September 22, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

The Diabetes Advocacy Alliance™ (DAA) would like to reaffirm its strong support for H.R. 1726/S. 1345, the Access to Quality Diabetes Education Act of 2015, in the wake of recent negative press and comments about the bill. We applaud the bill sponsors, Representative Ed Whitfield and Senator Jeanne Shaheen, for their leadership in the fight to provide older adults with diabetes the opportunity to better manage their disease, and thereby prevent its life-altering complications which include kidney failure, blindness, lower limb amputations, heart disease and strokes.

The DAA is a coalition whose vision is to influence change in the US health care system to improve diabetes prevention, detection and care. We believe that the Access to Quality Diabetes Education Act is critical to improving the lives of the millions of Americans enrolled in Medicare who work so hard every day to manage their diabetes.

Self-management is a vital tool for managing chronic disease and achieving good health-related outcomes. Because diabetes is a serious, life-long condition, much of the care related to the disease is ultimately carried out by the person with diabetes. Evidence from randomized controlled trials has shown that interventions that improve self-management for people with diabetes result in better glycemic control.<sup>i</sup> Other studies suggest that patients who are actively involved in their self-care may be more likely to get regular care that is part of their treatment plan, such as A1c tests and eye exams.<sup>ii</sup> Thus, diabetes educators play a vital role in improving the health of people with diabetes; a broad public health role in decreasing the morbidity and mortality associated with the disease; and a significant role in helping to rein in diabetes-related health care costs, which were \$245 billion annually in 2012—a 41 percent increase from 2007.<sup>iii</sup>

Federal recognition of credentialed diabetes educators as Medicare providers for diabetes self-management training services, including telehealth services, will provide Medicare beneficiaries with access to the education and tools they need to successfully manage their disease.

The DAA looks forward to working with you to advance important diabetes issues on behalf of the nearly 30 million Americans that live with the disease and the 86 million more at risk of developing it.

Sincerely,

Tricia Brooks  
DAA Co-Chair

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DAA Co-Chair

Henry Rodriguez, MD  
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<sup>i</sup> Norris SL, Engelgau MM, Narayan KM. Effectiveness of self-management training in type 2 diabetes: a systemic review of randomized controlled trials. *Diabetes Care* 24: 561-587, 2001.

<sup>ii</sup> Anderson RM, Funnell MM, Butler PM, Arnold MS, Fitzgerald JT, Feste CC. Patient empowerment: results of a randomized controlled trial. *Diabetes Care* 18:943-949, 1995.; Hofer TP, Katz SJ. Healthy behaviors among women in the United States and Ontario: the effect on use of preventive care. *Am J Public Health* 86:1755-1759, 1996.

<sup>iii</sup> American Diabetes Association. Economics Costs of Diabetes in the US in 2012. [Published ahead of print March 6, 2013] *Diabetes Care*. doi: 10.2337/dc12-2625.