



Thursday, February 7, 2019

Welcome to the new ADA Advocacy Insider Newsletter. This email replaces many of the alert and update messages you have received in the past on legislation and issues impacting people living with diabetes. Our goal with this communication is to keep you informed and give you a voice in the critical advocacy work and happenings in Washington D.C. and across the nation - from federal research and programs, to health care, to insulin affordability, and more. Read on for Advocacy highlights and ways you can take action to make a difference for people affected by diabetes.

### **Advocacy Library Opens!**

Be the best Advocate you can be – check out new videos on diabetes research, health care, insulin affordability, type 2 prevention, and much more. View the ADA Advocacy Library at [diabetes.org/advocacylibrary](https://diabetes.org/advocacylibrary) to learn more.

### **Leveraging Social Media for Advocacy**

Learn how something as simple and quick as a post on Facebook can connect you with your elected officials and have an unmistakable impact. [Register to join ADAs 'Using Social Media for Advocacy' webinar on February 13.](#)

### **Have You Done Your Advocacy Resolution?**

Now's the time to set your goals and lay out plans for how you'll engage in Diabetes Advocacy in 2019. Take advantage of [our Advocacy Resolution template](#) to get started and stay on track.

### **Diabetes at School: Los Angeles**

A group of health care providers and people who take care of students at school met in January at UCLA Medical Center to learn more about the challenges students with diabetes face at school, the protections students have under federal and state law, and how to connect families having problems at school with the ADA. While California is a state that allows students to self-manage their diabetes at school and allows trained non-medical school personnel to assist students with diabetes problems still occur. Making sure health care providers on the front lines know what to do to help their families is critical. Special shout out to ADA National Board Member and Los Angeles Community Leadership Board President, Cynthia Muñoz; and Los Angeles Safe at School Subcommittee Chairs Debbie Olson and Kailee Gaffney for arranging the session.

### **ADA Welcomes New Congress**

ADA's Federal Government Affairs team is looking forward to meeting with the 100 newly elected members of the 116th Congress. When the U.S. House and Senate convened in January they welcomed 64 new Democrats and 36 new Republicans to office. The newly elected members represent a diverse group of individuals, including 40 women, 25 racial or ethnic minorities, and five medical professionals. Additionally, many newly elected members of Congress made history in their own respective states. In the House, the new Democratic majority is led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), who regains the gavel after first being elected Speaker of the House in 2007. In the Senate, Republicans retain the majority,

while some new figures rise to Chair various committees. Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA), a champion for diabetes prevention, now chairs the powerful Senate Finance Committee.

ADA's staff will meet with all the newly elected members over the next three months to discuss ADA's 2019 Legislative and Regulatory Priorities and invite new members to join the Congressional Diabetes Caucus and to make diabetes a priority in their legislative work. Some who may share a commitment to people with diabetes include Representative Kim Schrier (WA-08), a pediatrician who has type 1 diabetes, and Representative Steve Watkins (KS-02), whose father and wife are physicians and wants to maintain protections for people with pre-existing conditions. We look forward to introducing our work to Reps. Schrier and Watkins and all of their colleagues in the 116th Congress.

## Policy Updates

**Health Insurance Plans:** Each year the federal government releases an update to rules health insurers will have to follow for plans they sell to individuals. We expect the trend of giving insurers increased flexibility to continue in the 2020 rules. We're paying particular attention to the rules for premiums, prescription drug coverage, special enrollment periods, and enrollment assistance. The ADA will send our feedback to the agency before the February 19 deadline. [Click here to read more about this proposed rule.](#) [Here you can read an assessment of how the proposed drug coverage rule changes can impact consumers.](#)

**Insulin Update:** An FDA proposal would update the definition of biologic medications: The FDA review and approval process for conventional drugs made through a chemical process (like metformin) is different than for biologics made from living cells (like vaccines). Even though insulin is made from living cells, it is not technically classified as a biologic under FDA rules since it was developed before those rules. Now that there is a regulatory pathway for "generic" biologic products, the FDA is going to bring all biologics—including insulin—into that regulatory framework. The ADA will submit comments on this proposal to the FDA by the February 25 deadline. [Click here to read the FDA Commissioner's thoughts](#) about what this change means, including a discussion of insulin.

**Glucose Meters and Test Strip Update:** The FDA has updated its guidance to companies that make blood glucose meters and test strips. Most of the changes are small, technical tweaks, but in the ADA's comments to the agency, we supported FDA's work overall to make sure meters and strips are accurate and reliable – especially in light of the [troubling results of a study on blood glucose testing system accuracy.](#)

**Medicare Medication Proposal:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) proposed changes to Medicare Part D (stand-alone prescription drug plans) and Medicare Advantage (Medicare plans sold by private insurers) rules for drug coverage. In our comments, ADA supported some positive changes like creating a tool prescribers can use to get beneficiary-specific cost-sharing information for prescription drugs. But we also raised concerns with proposals to allow plans to require prior authorization or step therapy for more medications.

*Questions or feedback about any of the updates featured in the Diabetes Advocacy Insider? Contact ADA's Grassroots team at [grassroots@diabetes.org](mailto:grassroots@diabetes.org).*