



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **DIABETES AWARENESS**

Statement by:  
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

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### DIABETES AWARENESS

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, I would like to send my condolences to all who have lost loved ones and friends to COVID-19 and to the more than 300,000 Canadians who have had the virus.

The toll is huge in ways that were previously unimaginable. During the pandemic, other diseases have not stopped. Canadians continue to receive stressful diagnoses of cancer, heart disease and other conditions, including diabetes, which affects many families — some in this chamber.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and November 14 was World Diabetes Day. There is much work to be done on this disease.

In the April pandemic surge, my nine-year-old granddaughter was suddenly hit with Type-1 diabetes. It is a shock to learn that one's own is affected. As you know, my children and grandchildren live in the U.K., and it was impossible for me to go, however much I wanted to. COVID was rampant. My son-in-law rushed her to the hospital and stayed with her through her eight-day sojourn. My daughter was not allowed to enter the hospital at all, despite the fact that my granddaughter had some critical times.

In 1921, almost 100 years ago, Canadian doctors Best and Banting discovered insulin, thereby saving millions of lives globally. I thank Canada's national and provincial diabetes associations, and their leaders and volunteers everywhere for

their work; the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation; the doctors and researchers for their untiring dedication; and all the nurses, psychologists, nutritionists and others who work daily with patients and families.

This diagnosis seriously challenges family routines, especially in the middle of a national lockdown.

We know Type-1 diabetics do not survive for more than two days without insulin. We also know that Type-1 and Type-2 diabetes are different diseases. We still do not know the cause of Type-1 diabetes, nor do we have a cure. Science has found ways to delay its onset for a couple of years in some instances.

The treatments with different insulins, new pumps and glucose monitors that send readings to one's phone are great advances, but the need for continued and increased research funding is paramount. So, too, is equal access for those who require the monitoring equipment, pumps and specific types of insulin.

As we approach this centenary, we need a nationwide strategy for both Type-1 and Type-2 diabetes. I am dedicated to new medical advances and supporting families who face the dramatic shifts in daily life that such a diagnosis brings. Hearing my nine-year-old Zoe pine for "life the way it used to be" tears at my heartstrings. But she was pleased to learn that Canadian children are presented with the same Rufus, the Bear with Diabetes, she was given at King's College Hospital in London.

Thank you.

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