

Windy City Whispers
67th Scientific Sessions American Diabetes Association
June 2007

Hello gang. We are at it again. I have put this task off as long as possible because it becomes more arduous each year. I swear that this one will be shorter and more to the point than earlier ones. The meetings took place in Chicago this year and approximately 13,000 doctors, nurses, educators, dieticians, diabetics and parents attended. I can't emphasize how much fun Chicago is. The weather was gorgeous and Chicago has a great many things to offer. I would recommend any family going to see a big city that offers things like the Science and Industries Museum, The Field Natural History Museum, The Aquarium, and the Chicago Art Institute. Of course, we had to get a little baseball in on the side and Wrigley Field has become my favorite stadium. It is beautiful, has tremendous history and the fans are both knowledgeable and pleasant. For those of you who always insist on a weather update, it was nice with only one day of severe humidity and one day of flooding rainstorms. The rest of the time it was as inviting as a midwest city can be.

International Diabetes

I am going to start off a little differently this year by going to the President's presentation on Saturday first. Dr. Larry Deeb is a pediatrician from Tallahassee, Florida, and as a result, his speech had a very distinct pediatric angle. His title of Unite for Diabetes pretty much underlined his point. He emphasized that diabetes is an international problem. He pointed out that in sub-Saharan Africa, insulin can cost 2/3 of the annual family income and most children with diabetes die within one year. Some countries have one or two diabetes experts for the full country. An example given was that the large city of Lima, Peru has no diabetologists whatsoever. He praised the UN resolution for Diabetes Day on November 14, 2007. The initiative was actually started by an International Diabetes Foundation Teen Advocate, Clare Rosenfelt. It recognizes the diabetes epidemic that is occurring internationally and the fact that it is going to lead to catastrophic problems. It calls for national resolutions for preventive care of diabetes. The numbers he gave were staggering: there are 246 million people with diabetes in the world today and by 2025 that number will have increased to 380 million people. In the United States alone, 225,000 deaths occur annually from diabetes, six million diabetics in our country are undiagnosed and 40 million diabetics (unfortunately many of them children) are uninsured. There is a new case of diabetes diagnosed in the United States every 21 seconds. The cost for the families is equally staggering: for patients with co-pays for their insurance, the cost is more than \$100 per month for each child and, of course, the uninsured have to pay considerably more. As a result, the question arises more and more "which is most important? I can't afford all". Those costs, of course, do not include pumps, continuous glucose monitoring, hypertension medication and anti-lipid medication.

The same theme was brought up by Fran Kaufmann, the president of the Council on Youth. She pointed out that at least one-half of the children developing diabetes are in the developing world. One-half of these children will die from lack of access to insulin. With the International

Diabetes Foundation program, \$1 per day will provide the material needed for a diabetic child to survive. She recommended two web sites for people who are interested. First there is www.lifeforachild.idf.org. This is will give you the information needed to donate for the international fund. There is also www.insulinforlife.org which collects and distributes insulin and glucose strips. *This information was rather disturbing to say the least. We all get caught up in the newer technologies and the new gadgets. We are all working to achieve better control for your children and we worry about each 0.5% rise or drop in Hgb A1c. It is very sobering to realize that a huge number of children are dying each year just from the lack of simple supplies. It does seem to put things into perspective doesn't it? If anybody would like to help set up a program for international donation, I am sure the Diabetes Center would be glad to provide some man power. We are all in this together and we need to remember those who are less fortunate than ourselves.*