

**Senator Joseph Lieberman**  
**Opening Statement for Juvenile Diabetes Hearing**  
**As Prepared For Delivery**  
**Washington, DC**  
**June 21, 2005**

Good morning.

I want to thank Chairman Collins for holding this hearing on the toll juvenile diabetes takes on families, on our health care system and – mostly – on the children themselves.

Diabetes currently costs our nation about \$132 billion a year in health care costs and afflicts about 17 million people.

But as we will soon hear from our young witnesses, the lifelong costs to the children are incalculable.

Childhood should be a time of wonder. Why is the sky blue? How do birds fly? Where does the sun go when it sets?

A child should never have to ask: “Why am I sick? Why did this happen to me? Will I get better?”

But it’s a question millions of children with juvenile diabetes have already had to ask – and each year they are joined by another 13,000 children asking the same question.

Shortly you will hear from Ethan Falla from my state of Connecticut, who is joined here today by his fellow nutmeggers Allison Roberto and Travis Blinn.

I look forward to meeting with all three of you later today so we can talk in more detail later about how juvenile diabetes has affected you.

I also look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses today to advise me on legislation I will propose to establish a National Center for Cures within the National Institutes of Health that would help us find cures for diabetes, as well as cures and treatments for diseases like cancer, Alzheimer’s and AIDS.

The National Center for Cures would be like a magnet, pulling together the vast and promising – but swirling and disparate – research ideas and projects in all of the scientific and medical disciplines being conducted by both the public and private sectors.

I believe we need to pull together work already being done in stem cell research, the Human Genome Project and pharmaceuticals.

By sharing knowledge I believe we can bring cures from research to reality more quickly.

One promising avenue is bolstering the use of islet cell transplantation– a treatment that can help diabetes sufferers produce their own insulin – and the use of stem cells for this purpose holds the greatest promise.

Research should go forward in this area.

I invite all of today’s witnesses to help us find the best ways to organize and direct federal research and other scientific efforts to where they will do the most good.

It is something each generation is charged by legacy to do for the generations that follow.

Jonas Salk – developer of the polio vaccine that ended what was once another great childhood scourge – said: “Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.”

Those are words to live by . . . words to work by . . . words to guide us to our goal.

We live in a time where unprecedented advances in medicine, science, computers and communications have opened paths of discovery unimaginable just 10 or 20 years ago.

With all this knowledge and all these technical powers at our disposal, it's now our duty to live up to the legacy handed to us by generations of discoverers like Salk.

It's time to be good ancestors.

Or, in the words of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International: "Let's be dedicated to finding a cure."

Thank you Madam Chairman.