

**Testimony of Ms. Caitlin Crawford
Yarmouth, Maine**

At the Hearing entitled

**“The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Federal
Government: A Model Public-Private Partnership Accelerating
Research Toward a Cure”**

Tuesday, June 19, 2007, 9:30 a.m.

Before the

Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Hello! My name is Caitlin Crawford. I am 13 years old and I am from Yarmouth, Maine. Maine is a great place to live, and I feel so lucky to have you, Senator Collins, as my Senator. You do so much for people with diabetes and you give us all so much hope. Thank you for that.

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes 22 months ago on August 19th 2005. That was the day that my life changed forever. Unlike some of the kids in this room, I remember what life was like before diabetes, and I would give anything to go back to being a “normal” kid. Every day for the past 22 months I test my blood sugar 10 to 12 times, take 5 to 7 insulin shots and worry all the time, especially when I close my eyes at night to go to bed.

I am a skier on the Middle School Team in Yarmouth. And in a lot of ways, the way I think about each ski race is how I think about my diabetes. I have been trained to go down the mountain – looking at each gate – attacking the hill and crossing that finish line. In ski racing, the first gate is the hardest – as you push out of the starting block everything has to be perfect. This is just like getting up in the morning when you have diabetes – I really have to think ahead – how do I feel? How much exercise will I be doing today? What am I going to eat? How much insulin am I going to have to take today? I have to make sure that my bag is always full of the supplies that I need to carry me through the day. I do sometimes forget and pay the consequence later in the day.

When you are racing – you never really hear the fans as you are speeding down the mountain but you know they are supporting you and cheering you on. With diabetes, I need to rely on this support every day. My fans are my family, friends, coaches, doctors and nurses. My number one fan is my family and they are amazing. I have realized what they have had to give up to help me, especially my mother who left her job when I was diagnosed. My brother, Wes gives up a lot because of me. If I am not feeling well or my numbers are off – everything has to stop and that means sometimes something he really wants to do. My dad is the rock. He picks us all up on those hard days. My friends are there but I always feel that I am different and not like them – I wish that I could just be like them to be so carefree. My school nurse is the best also. She is always looking out for me so I can think about my studies.

When I ski, sometimes I slip and catch an edge, but I get back up and continue on. This is how I feel about diabetes. I have had some real bad lows and some real bad highs. I have watched a Taxi drive away in New York City and realized in that cab was my diabetes bag and we were 300 miles away from home. We got it back after a few stressful hours. Another time, I got stuck on a chair lift, and as I sat up in the air looking down I realized that I did not have my bag of diabetes supplies with me. After 40 minutes I was still stuck, thinking that this could turn into something really bad soon.

Unlike ski racing, where each race has a beginning and an end, diabetes is always with me. I can never take a break. It is hard and sometimes I just want to stop and take a break - stop testing my blood sugar, stop having to take insulin shots, stop counting all the carbs

in my food, and stop worrying about what might happen to me all the time. But I know this is not an option.

When I think about my future, I think about being the best skier I can be. I also think about what diabetes is doing to my body and that unless a cure is found I might be faced with serious complications. I know that my hope for a cure lies in medical research. I am doing my part to keep myself healthy, and I am asking Congress to help by providing more funding for research. Progress is being made, but there is more work to do. I will continue to do my part, participating in walks, speaking to friends or just being a friend to a new diabetic. But time is not on my side and we can't do it without your help.

When I race, I wear the number 19 on my back and when people hear "go #19!" – it is just not for me to ski faster – it's also the day my life changed forever.

Thank you for listening to my story.