

**Testimony of Mr. Tre' Hawkins
Detroit, Michigan**

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

Good morning. My name is Tre' Hawkins and I live in Detroit, Michigan. I am 12 years old. To you, I many look like a regular kid. But I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was seven years old, and I have spent every day since then wanting to be a regular kid, free from diabetes.

It was my grandmother who recognized the symptoms. She was worried about my weight, my constant hunger and thirst, and about my going to the bathroom every 10 to 15 minutes. She took me to see the doctor and they did a urine test and my sugar level was very high. The doctor had her take me directly to Beaumont Hospital and I stayed there for three or four days until they got my glucose level under control. At that time I knew I was sick, but I didn't know how much my life was going to change.

It was difficult at first at school, because my classmates didn't understand diabetes. My teachers were concerned about what to do if I became sick while at school. Three of my teachers took a weekend class at the hospital to learn about diabetes and what to do if I became sick. They then had me talk to my classmates about diabetes and now I have some playground buddies that look out for me at recess and know what to do if I get sick. I know that I am lucky to have such good support at school.

It's a little better now, but I still have trouble keeping my sugar level in the normal range during school because I have to count the carbs I eat and there are no labels on the food to tell me how many carbs are in what I am eating. When my sugar level goes to high or too low I have trouble concentrating in class and I don't feel well.

This disease has been a financial burden on my grandparents and my mom, but they try hard to make my life as normal as possible and they don't complain. When you have type 1 diabetes, you have to take insulin every day and there are lots of supplies that go along with it.

I am glad that you invited kids to talk to you about what it's like to have diabetes and why a cure is important to us. For me, a cure means being able to be a kid – to play baseball and ride my bike without the fear of my blood sugar dropping too low. It means no more pricking my fingers at least five times a day. It means no more getting sick in school because my sugar level is too high. It means no more scheduling my eating and counting carbs. For me and the kids just like me, it means freedom. Freedom to just be a kid.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today and thank you for listening. I am just a kid, but I have big dreams. Right now, my biggest dream is to be cured of diabetes. Please remember me – Tre' Hawkins from Detroit, Michigan – and work hard to provide more money for diabetes research so this dream can become a reality.