

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3812

August 5, 2004

Mr. Paul Tubiana
P.O. Box 21832
Lehigh Valley, PA 15907

Dear Mr. Tubiana:

I appreciate you contacting me about diabetes. I want to assure you that combating this disease has been a priority for me because I have seen how many people are affected by it in our area. I'm seeing the number of people with diabetes increasing, especially in rural areas where people are not getting the nutrition information, treatment and monitoring they need. I feel strongly that more research funding is needed, coupled with better treatment delivery and concentrated outreach efforts to reverse this trend and reduce the burden of health care costs associated with it.

Diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death by disease in the United States and it has no cure. The total annual economic cost of diabetes in the nation was estimated at \$98 billion in 1997. That includes \$44 billion in direct medical and treatment costs, plus \$54 billion in indirect costs attributed to disability and mortality. Diabetes can lead to blindness, amputations heart disease and other debilitating conditions.

My work this year in the Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriations has resulted in over \$20 million in funding for local research, outreach, diagnosis and management of diabetes in the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. Additionally, I obtained \$31 million for telemedicine and automated technology projects that will reduce health care costs and speed diagnosis and treatment, especially in rural areas like ours.

A major effort included in this funding is the expansion of a program through the Agricultural Extension Service that will bring the expertise of the nationally renowned Joslin Diabetes Center to the local area to perform outreach and patient education in rural communities. This program has had good results in other parts of the country, so I wanted to bring it here. I secured \$5.9 million in funding to do that. Additionally, I secured \$5 million for research at Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh for Type I diabetes and \$10 million for Type II diabetes research at UPMC Diabetes Research Institute in the defense spending bill. This research will also focus on improving diagnosis and treatment in our area.

Again, please be assured that fighting diabetes is a top priority for me. I appreciate your input on this issue and hope you'll keep in touch with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Murtha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

JOHN P. MURTHA
YOUR CONGRESSMAN

JPM:TF