

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR
HEALTH PROMOTION AND
DISEASE PREVENTION

July 9, 2004

Mr. Paul Tubiana
P.O. Box 21832
Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania 18002-1832

Dear Mr. Tubiana:

Thank you for your recent e-mail to Governor Edward G. Rendell advocating for the use of C-Peptide testing when differentiating between type 1 and type 2 diabetes. As Deputy Secretary for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, I am responding on the Governor's behalf. As you are aware, living with diabetes is often stressful or frightening for a child or adolescent. The daily regimen of checking blood glucose levels, receiving insulin injections, and monitoring dietary intake is challenging to manage, especially for teenagers who are rapidly growing physically, mentally, and emotionally. Accurate diagnosis and proper management of diabetes may assist children and adolescents as they cope with this chronic disease.

According to the 2002 Pennsylvania Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 8% of Pennsylvania adults said they had been told by a doctor that they have diabetes. Of these individuals, 4% were diagnosed when they were under the age of 18. In 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that approximately 206,000 people under the age of 20 have diabetes.

Historically, most cases of diabetes diagnosed among children and adolescents – an estimated 13,000 young people annually – have been classified as type 1 diabetes. However, there has been a tremendous increase in the prevalence of type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents within the last 10-20 years. Children and adolescents diagnosed with type 2 diabetes are generally between 10 and 19 years old, obese, have a strong family history for type 2 diabetes, have insulin resistance, and have poor glycemic control.

The *Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes (Standards)*, supported by the American Diabetes Association, are viewed as the hallmark criteria for the diagnosis and management of both types of diabetes. According to the 2004 *Standards*, the preferred method for physicians to utilize when differentiating between type 1 and type 2 diabetes among children and adolescents is obtaining fasting plasma glucose levels. The *Standards* do not address the use of the C-Peptide test when screening for diabetes among young people.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is committed to addressing the issue of diabetes among Pennsylvanians. In December 2003, the Department established the Diabetes Stakeholders Group consisting of more than 30 individuals with expertise in the care and treatment of individuals with diabetes. The Diabetes Stakeholders Group is presently completing a performance assessment of the diabetes public health system in Pennsylvania and will develop recommendations for its continual improvement. For additional information on Pennsylvania's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, please refer to the Department's website, www.health.state.pa.us.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have additional questions, please contact Mr. Kevin Alvarnaz, Cardiovascular Health Section Chief, at (717) 787-2957. Again, thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Joanne Corte Grossi
Deputy Secretary for Health Promotion
and Disease Prevention