

Local diabetes advocate visiting Washington to urge more federal funding in efforts to stop diabetes

FRYEBURG — In an effort to stop diabetes and the devastating effects of this disease in our community, Brenda Leavitt a diabetes advocacy leader in Fryeburg, Maine will join more than 200 diabetes advocates from across the country in Washington, D.C. for the American Diabetes Association's Call to Congress. Call to Congress is the association's premier national advocacy effort and this year's event will be held March 9-11.

Attendees will include children and adults with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, family members of individuals with diabetes, researchers and other health care professionals. All are committed to advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national levels.

Leavitt is the mother of Miranda Maria Leavitt who passed away on Feb. 17, 2007 from diabetes complications. Miranda had Type 1 diabetes from the time she was 12 years old. With the help and guidance of family and friends, the Miranda Leavitt Diabetes Fund was formed and is being managed by the White Mountain Community Health Center. This fund is available to people who need assistance with their diabetes needs.



Pictured above is Brenda Leavitt (left) with Sen. Susan Collins of Maine. Collins was presented an award by the American Diabetes Association.

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Leavitt and the other advocates are scheduled to meet with Members of Congress today to urge them to support federal funding levels in fiscal year 2012 for diabetes research and prevention programs at the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that recognize the magnitude of the nation's diabetes epidemic. Of the nearly 26 million Americans living with diabetes, more than 87,000 of them are residents of Maine, and 74,000 of them are residents in New Hampshire. The advocates will also urge their members of Congress to join the Congressional Diabetes Caucuses, which act to educate Members about diabetes and to support legislation that improves diabetes, research, education and treatment. While in Washington, D.C., Leavitt will also collaborate with other Call to Congress participants from around the country to plan diabetes advocacy efforts back home in their communities. "My goal through the Miranda Leavitt Diabetes Fund is to raise awareness and educate our community to understand the severity of diabetes and how through proper diet and exercise, prevention for Type 2 diabetes can be accomplished", according to Leavitt.

"Call to Congress brings Diabetes Advocates from across the country together in the movement to stop

diabetes and provides them with the opportunity to tell our federal government how important it is to fight this deadly epidemic," said John Griffin, Jr., the chair of the board of the American Diabetes Association. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projects that one in three children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime unless our country changes its course. Congress must provide the funding and leadership necessary to invest in research and ultimately save lives."

Diabetes is a growing epidemic and is taking a devastating physical, emotional and financial toll on our country. The national price tag for diabetes is at an astounding \$174 billion per year and that cost is estimated to almost triple in the next 25 years. Factoring in the additional costs of undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetes, and gestational diabetes brings the total diabetes-related cost to \$218 billion.

For more information about Call to Congress, visit www.diabetes.org/CallToCongress.

The American Diabetes Association funds research to prevent, cure and manage diabetes; delivers services to hundreds of communities; provides objective and credible information; and gives voice to those denied their rights because of diabetes. For more information call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or visit www.diabetes.org.