



# DIABETES

A D V O C A T E

PROVIDING THE LATEST NEWS FROM ADA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY DEPARTMENT

## Vote November 2

**When you cast your ballot, you will be doing more than just voting for president or a member of Congress. You will be impacting future legislation that is important to people with diabetes.**

**T**his past year, Congress and the White House decided how much money would be spent on diabetes research and prevention, whether researchers should be allowed to follow the potential of stem cell research, and whether or not to support legislation that will allow small businesses to deny coverage for their employees' diabetes needs.

It is up to you to find out where your elected officials stand on the issues that are important to people with diabetes. As a nonprofit organization, the American Diabetes Association neither supports nor opposes candidates for office. However, we can help you ask

the right questions of your candidates so that you can learn where they stand on the issues.

The 2004 Diabetes Commitment Survey for Candidates of the United States Congress is available online at <http://advocacy.diabetes.org>. Log on today, download the survey, and take it to your candidates for Congress.

The commitment survey should be completed by candidates for Congress and faxed back to the American Diabetes Association. It asks the candidates if they agree or disagree to support a 10 percent increase to the diabetes research budget at the National Institutes of Health and a doubling of the diabetes prevention budget at the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention. After the election, the American Diabetes Association will use the information gathered about newly elected and reelected members of Congress in its advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill.

## Police Academy Punished For Treatment Of Cadet With Diabetes

The Legal Advocacy Division at the American Diabetes Association is celebrating yet another victory.

This spring, the U.S. Department of Justice successfully settled a case involving Ronnie Collins, a Mississippi state police cadet with diabetes who was denied basic accommodations at the state training academy. Collins was denied food on several occasions even though he had told

*continued on page 88*

*continued from page 86*

police academy officials about his diabetes and about the need for food to avoid low blood glucose levels. On his second day at the academy he experienced low blood glucose. Instead of providing him with a chance to get treatment for his condition (essentially, food), the academy immediately dismissed the cadet and sent him out to drive through rural Mississippi while his blood glucose levels remained dangerously low.

This case was in the federal court system for many years, and the American Diabetes Association continued to follow it, providing technical expertise as needed. When it appeared that the case was going to go to a jury trial, the State of Mississippi settled.

In addition to monetary compensation to the cadet, the settlement provides that Mississippi will implement a reasonable accommodation policy, train its training officers on the policy and on recognizing diabetes and other disabilities, and incorporate an overview of diabetes into its existing curriculum for training of troopers and future cadets.

This success story follows other recent victories involving people with diabetes working in law enforcement and the military. In 2002, in a case brought by Lt. Jeff Kapche,

the City of San Antonio, Tex., was told that it may not have a blanket policy to exclude people with insulin-treated diabetes from law enforcement positions (see *Diabetes Forecast*, April 2003). In 2003, Petty Officer Jeremy Wright was able to stay in the U.S. Coast Guard after being diagnosed with type 1 diabetes (see *Diabetes Forecast*, October 2003). These victories help protect workers with diabetes throughout the country when they face discrimination on the job.

## National Town Hall Meetings Throw The Spotlight On Diabetes

The American Diabetes Association has urged the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to develop a national strategic plan to deal with the diabetes epidemic in the United States. Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy

Thompson listened to the Association's concerns and led an effort to take diabetes awareness and prevention to a new level. One of the results was a series of Diabetes Town Hall Meetings that were held in Cincinnati, Ohio, Little Rock, Ark., and Seattle, Wash., this spring and summer.

"[Diabetes] is a serious problem facing our nation and a problem that if we don't do something about it, it's only going to get worse," Thompson said to diabetes advocates in Cincinnati.

At each of the three events, diabetes advocates and Association leaders showed up in force, eager to highlight the urgent need for a greater federal commitment to diabetes.

"The American Diabetes Association is grateful to Secretary Thompson for his commitment to diabetes," said Stewart Perry, chair of the National Advocacy Committee at the Association. "But even more so, we are grateful to the ADA volunteers and staff who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the Diabetes Town Hall Meetings in their areas and make a strong showing on behalf of all people with diabetes."



◀ Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee (R) (left), who lost 105 pounds after his diagnosis of type 2 diabetes, stands with Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson at the Diabetes Town Hall Meeting in Little Rock, Ark.