ADA: Congress Must Prioritize Action on Health Disparities

American Diabetes Association Pushes for Federal Policy Change to Remove Systemic Barriers to Health Care Equity and Access

Arlington, VA, July 30, 2021 – The American Diabetes Association® (ADA) this week urged immediate action to help rectify system-wide hurdles to health and well-being before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee. In a statement for the congressional record, submitted in conjunction with last week’s subcommittee hearing on life expectancy disparities, the ADA spoke to the unique structural challenges faced by Americans with diabetes and stressed the need for federal policy change.

“As you are no doubt aware, stark inequities in life expectancy exist in the U.S. today – on average, people of color, those living in poverty, and other historically underserved groups live significantly shorter lives than white Americans. Although these disparities existed long before the outbreak of COVID-19, the pandemic’s effects have widened them: while COVID lowered overall U.S. life expectancy by 1.13 years in 2020, reductions were three to four times higher among Black and Latino communities than among whites, wiping out more than a decade of progress in narrowing the Black-white life expectancy gap,” reads the statement.

“These inequities are felt especially acutely by the diabetes community, within which people of color and low-income Americans are, sadly, heavily overrepresented…These patterns exist in large part because the social, economic, and environmental factors that put people at a higher risk for developing diabetes are especially pervasive in America’s communities of color. Zip code, educational opportunity, and socioeconomic status often dictate how far someone lives from the nearest grocery store, whether they have access to healthy foods, and whether they have quality health care nearby, putting needed resources out of reach for many of those who need them most.”

Read the full statement here.

# # #
About the American Diabetes Association
Every day more than 4,000 people are newly diagnosed with diabetes in America. More than 122 million Americans have diabetes or prediabetes and are striving to manage their lives while living with the disease. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation’s leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 80 years the ADA has been driving discovery and research to treat, manage and prevent diabetes, while working relentlessly for a cure. We help people with diabetes thrive by fighting for their rights and developing programs, advocacy and education designed to improve their quality of life. Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life. To learn more or to get involved, visit us at diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook (American Diabetes Association), Twitter (@AmDiabetesAssn) and Instagram (@AmDiabetesAssn).