

# Senate Education Committee

*Ryan Meleedy 271-4151*

**SB 102-FN**, making informational materials regarding type 1 diabetes available on the department of education website.

**Hearing Date:** February 4, 2025

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Ward, Sullivan, Abbas, Prentiss and Altschiller

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill directs the department of education, in consultation with the department of health and human services, to make informational materials regarding type 1 diabetes available on the department of education's website. The bill also directs local school districts to make the materials available to parents and students.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Ward

Sen. Avard

Sen. Lang

Sen. Sullivan

Sen. Long

Sen. Prentiss

Sen. Rochefort

Rep. W. MacDonald

Rep. Kuttab

Rep. Damon

Rep. Ladd

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator David Rochefort, Senator Suzanne Prentiss, Representative Peggy Balboni, Representative Hope Damon, Jerry Frew (NHSAA), Janet Lucas, Pamela DiNapoli (New Hampshire Nurses Association), Daniel Richardson, Andrew Serrano (Dartmouth Diabetes Link), Costan Autry (Dartmouth Diabetes Link), Kyriakos Papasavas (Dartmouth Diabetes Link).

**Who opposes the bill:** No one signed in opposition to this bill.

**Who is neutral on the bill:** No one signed in neutrality to this bill.

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Senator Ruth Ward**

- Senator Ward introduced her prime-sponsored Senate Bill 102-FN.
- She explained that the bill's intent is to make educational material about type 1 diabetes more available in schools.
- She explained that it was important for parents, teachers, and students to be more aware of the signs and symptoms of type 1 diabetes.

- Senator Ward informed the committee that type 1 diabetes normally occurs in young children and that New Hampshire had the eighth-highest occurrence of type 1 diabetes among adolescents in the United States.
- Many other states already have some sort of information portal for warning signs and symptoms of type 1 diabetes in their schools, and New Hampshire should do the same.
- Senator Abbas asked why type 2 diabetes information wouldn't be included. Senator Ward responded, stated that type 2 diabetes comes on much slower than type 1, and usually occurs in adults as opposed to children. She explained type 1 diabetes was much less foreseeable, which is why spreading awareness of the early symptoms is deemed more necessary for school children.
- Senator Altschiller supported the bill but questioned why information on other medical diseases affecting children wouldn't be disseminated if the Department of Education would already be providing information on type 1 diabetes. Senator Ward didn't see the Department of Education's role as being the source of medical information for all different types of diseases and that they would merely be providing links to preexisting information for type 1 diabetes based on the bill's language. Type 1 diabetes is a unique condition. This is intended to educate school staff members and parents so that they can detect the early signs, rather than a board of public health information for all the diseases that affect children. Senator Ward said it was not a bad idea, but that further conversations would need to occur with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education.
- Senator Sullivan asked if Senator Ward was aware of the wellness office within the Department of Education, which she claimed already had a similar portal with off-site links for physical and mental health information. Senator Ward expressed that she was unaware.

### **Representative Hope Damon**

- Representative Damon testified in support of the bill, explaining she is a retired diabetes educator and dietitian. She explained that the early-phase symptoms often appear as flu-like symptoms. By the time symptoms have fully manifested, cognition can be affected, causing permanent damage and a potential coma.
- Rep. Damon explained the extent of the early-phase symptoms that patients tend to experience.
- Roughly 50% of kids diagnosed with type 1 diabetes are in a state of Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA), which can be fatal if not treated immediately.
- Rep. Damon viewed the bill as essential to alerting people to the seriousness of these seemingly common illness symptoms, and could educate parents on screening options for their children.

- Rep. Damon you screen positive in stage two of symptoms for kids eight years or older, it will decrease the onset of type 1 diabetes for about two years, allowing families to learn how to manage diabetes before they reach a critical situation.
- Rep. Damon would like to see the bill amended to include type 2 diabetes because 90% of people who have diabetes have type 2, and the occurrence of type 2 diabetes in teenagers is rising. She emphasized the sooner it is diagnosed, the sooner families will learn to manage the disease and reduce the risk of complications.
- Senator Altschiller asked Rep. Damon if this is a good opportunity to expand the bill to include other childhood diseases present in New Hampshire.
- Rep. Damon responded t she was in favor of Senator Altschiller’s idea with a slight degree of hesitation. She explained that if Senator Altschiller’s suggestion were to be implemented, a thoughtful set of criteria should be developed to decide what conditions should be communicated to ensure the Department of Education doesn’t assume the role of the Department of Health and Human Services. She emphasized that she wasn’t opposed to the idea, but that if it comes to fruition, it should be limited to diseases that particularly affect children.

### **Pam DiNapoli – New Hampshire School Nurses Association**

- Ms. DiNapoli briefed the committee on the importance of school nurses and their critical role in the students' health at their schools and making sure parents are aware of their child’s health status.
- Citing CDC statistics, she explained that type 1 diabetes is on the rise in the United States, specifically in New Hampshire. She also briefed the committee on what type 1 diabetes is from an anatomical perspective.
- The symptoms of early-onset type 1 diabetes are frequent urination, constant thirst, weight loss, and fatigue. Correctly detecting these symptoms allows people to be treated early, which leads to far better outcomes for those affected and can save lives.
- If symptoms aren’t caught early enough, people can be susceptible to developing Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA), which is life-threatening and requires hospitalization. She explained that when DKA occurs, the patient is officially diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.
- Early detection is essential. Disseminating information through the school system would significantly help teachers, parents, and students to detect the early symptoms of type 1 diabetes.
- Senator Altschiller asked whether Ms. DiNapoli thought it would be a good idea to add other child disease information to the bill, requiring more information for other diseases to be disseminated by the Department of Education. Ms.

DiNapoli stated this was a concern of other members of her organization. This bill, as written, would be a good start and it would be beneficial to add information about other diseases affecting children to the Department of Education website in the future.

#### **Andrew Serrano – Dartmouth Diabetes Link Member**

- Mr. Serrano shared his experience living with type 1 diabetes, explaining that he was diagnosed as a toddler. He explained the early symptoms of type 1 diabetes are often mistaken for common illnesses, which can have life-threatening consequences.
- This bill is critical to ensure that parents, school staff, and students have up-to-date information on type 1 diabetes symptoms, contributing to the proper early diagnoses and subsequent treatments.
- The bill's passage would make the difference between manageable early treatments and life-threatening DKA for many New Hampshire children.

#### **Costan Autry – President & Co-Founder of Dartmouth Diabetes Link**

- Mr. Autry described his experience with developing type 1 diabetes, the life-threatening DKA diagnoses he received, and the symptoms that led up to his DKA diagnosis.
- This bill would make people more aware of the early symptoms of diabetes and could help prevent children from experiencing life-threatening DKA that he experienced due to a lack of awareness about the symptoms and what they signify.
- Due to his lack of awareness of what his symptoms were signaling, Mr. Autry did not access treatment early enough, causing life-threatening DKA and prolonged hospitalization. He emphasized the bill would help create the necessary awareness for people to determine the significance of these symptoms, and to help students avoid reaching the critical point of DKA with early treatment.

#### **Kyriakos Papasavas - President & Co-Founder of Dartmouth Diabetes Link**

- Mr. Papasavas informed the committee that type 1 diabetes is the second most common autoimmune disease for children and young adults, explaining that, unlike type 2 diabetes, it is not preventable and is not caused by diet or other outside factors.

- He explained his father had a background in health care and that when he began experiencing symptoms of early-onset type 1 diabetes, his father immediately knew what the source of the symptoms was, and he was able to get immediate treatment.
- Most teachers and families do not have the same background in health care and, therefore, don't have the same level of understanding of what the early symptoms mean. He saw this bill as a potential solution to this lack of awareness, allowing New Hampshire students to receive the same early treatment that he was fortunate to receive thanks to parents and teachers having a broader understanding of the symptoms.
- He referred to Senator Abbas' question regarding type 2 diabetes as indicative of the public's lack of understanding of the differentiation between type 1 and type 2 diabetes and a general lack of knowledge of type 1 diabetes altogether.
- He was optimistic that the dissemination of educational information for type 1 diabetes would limit the bullying of students who suffer from the condition, because their classmates would have a potentially better understanding of the severity of their condition.
- Senator Prentiss inquired about the Diabetes Link organization that Mr. Papasavas, Mr. Serrano, and Mr. Autry were a part of at Dartmouth University. Mr. Papasavas explained that he and Mr. Autry were freshmen at Dartmouth and were surprised upon their arrival to find out that there were no organizations at the school to represent the interests of diabetic students. He explained that they contacted Diabetes Link, a national organization, and founded a chapter at Dartmouth to advocate for the interests of diabetic people. He briefed the committee on upcoming initiatives that the chapter had planned, explaining that this bill was their first form of formal advocacy since the chapter's inception.

### **Representative Peggy Balboni**

- Representative Balboni testified in support of Senate Bill 102-FN.
- She detailed her family's experience with her son's traumatic type 1 diabetes diagnosis. Her son was experiencing extreme symptoms of early-onset type 1 diabetes, and her family knew something was off but had no idea that he was suffering from the early phases of the condition. She explained a school nurse's detection led to his hospitalization, and that he spent a week in the hospital suffering from DKA.
- Rep. Balboni explained that if she and other members of her family had been familiarized with the symptoms of early type 1 diabetes, the trauma that her son faced would have been avoidable.

- She explained this bill would allow families and teachers to be knowledgeable of what these symptoms mean, which could eliminate much of the hardships that patients face by treating them early on.
- Rep. Balboni expressed agreement with Senator Altschiller's idea to provide other information for diseases that affect children in addition to the information provided for type 1 diabetes that the bill would instate.