



House Bill 721 - Memo of Support
Senate Committee on Health & Welfare – April 3, 2024

Chair Lyons, Vice-Chair Weeks, and Honorable Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the American Diabetes Association (ADA), and over 44,500 adult Vermonters diagnosed with diabetes (or 8.4%), to express our support for House Bill 721 (H.721) which would expand access for Dr. Dynasuar up to the age of 21, and expand income threshold for pregnant residents to 312% of the federal poverty level.

An individual's ability to manage their diabetes is directly tied to his or her ability to access affordable and adequate health insurance. When people cannot afford the medication, supplies, and services necessary to manage their diabetes, they scale back, ration or forego the care they need, potentially leading to costly complications and even death. Access to affordable and adequate care also presents the opportunity for early detection and prevention. Early diagnosis in diabetes is essential to avoiding severe consequences that can include kidney failure, cardiovascular disease, blindness, and leg and foot amputations.

In Vermont, the total direct medical expenses for diagnosed diabetes was estimated to be \$362 million in 2017 and an additional \$158 million was spent on indirect costs from lost productivity due to diabetes.¹

Expanding health care coverage for pregnant people and young adults with gestational diabetes, diabetes and prediabetes - before they develop disabling and costly complications - not only helps those individuals maintain their health but is also cost-effective for the state in the long run.

On behalf of the ADA, I urge the Committee to embrace this commonsense approach on behalf of Vermont residents with gestational diabetes, diabetes and prediabetes who simply want the opportunity for better health.

Thank you for your consideration of favorable passage for H.721.

Monica Billger
Director, State Government Affairs
American Diabetes Association
mbillger@diabetes.org

¹ https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/adv_2024_state_fact_vermont.pdf