

## Designating Diabetic Ketoacidosis Awareness Day April 26

My name is Antoinette Worsham a mother of two type one diabetics. When my daughters were diagnosed they both were in Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) a life threatening disease unknown to many. My oldest daughter Antavia passed away April 26, 2017 at the young age of 22; due to DKA. DKA can happen to type 1 diabetics for many reasons the most common is lack of insulin. Antavia was rationing her insulin due to the high cost. I have become a diabetes advocate and have been fighting since for affordable insulin as I am in fear the same will happen to my youngest daughter. DKA if left untreated is deadly. Many die in their sleep as my daughter did, Alec Smith of Minnesota died in June 2017 from rationing insulin after he aged off his mother's insurance and Rachel of California. Rachel passed away at the young age of 12. Rachel had been feeling ill. Rachel had not been diagnosed as being a type 1 diabetic. Her parents did not find out until an autopsy was performed. There are so many cases of patients going into DKA that have not been recorded and it is time to make a change. The Department of Health and Human Services and CDC should make diabetic ketoacidosis a disease that is reported such as STDs, cancer, and a list of others. I believe with CDC, The Ohio Department of Health and other governmental health organizations keeping a record would #1 provide real data of number of cases, #2 insulin would be accessible and affordable to the American people as it is a life sustaining drug #3 could possibly save more lives. DKA day is now observed in Cincinnati, Ohio a proclamation signed by Mayor Cranley in honor of Antavia. As a mother, I am fighting for the diabetes community. Type 1 diabetes is a disease that is left unnoticed. Type 1 Diabetes is an autoimmune disease. Type 1 diabetics does not contract this disease due to being overweight, living in low poverty or even being African American as the media has depicted. Type 1 Diabetes is not prone to race. Type 1 Diabetes is no longer called Juvenile diabetes. Many adults over the age of 18 have been diagnosed with this disease all over the states. There is now a type of diabetes called LADA which means Latent autoimmune diabetes in adults. LADA is a slow-progressing form of autoimmune diabetes. Like the autoimmune disease type 1 diabetes, LADA occurs because your pancreas stops producing adequate insulin, most likely from some "insult" that slowly damages the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. But unlike type 1 diabetes, with LADA, you often won't need insulin for several months up to years after you've been diagnosed.

Diabetic ketoacidosis is a serious complication of diabetes that occurs when your body produces high levels of blood acids called ketones.

The condition develops when your body can't produce enough insulin. Insulin normally plays a key role in helping sugar (glucose) — a major source of energy for your muscles and other tissues — enter your cells. Without enough insulin, your body begins to break down fat as fuel. This process produces a buildup of acids in the bloodstream called ketones, eventually leading to diabetic ketoacidosis if untreated.

## Symptoms

Diabetic ketoacidosis signs and symptoms often develop quickly, sometimes within 24 hours. For some, these signs and symptoms may be the first indication of having diabetes. You may notice:

- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Weakness or fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Fruity-scented breath
- Confusion

Which quite often are flu-like symptoms. I have heard many stories where sick Americans have gone to see their doctor or ER due to feeling sick and was turned away to go back a few days later to be told they have type 1 diabetes. Do you know how much an ER and/or office cost? That is unacceptable in the United States of America. Our healthcare system needs revamped and working for the American people.

Without enough insulin, your body can't use sugar properly for energy. This prompts the release of hormones that break down fat as fuel, which produces acids known as ketones. Excess ketones build up in the blood and eventually "spill over" into the urine.

Diabetic ketoacidosis is usually triggered by:

- **An illness.** An infection or other illness can cause your body to produce higher levels of certain hormones, such as adrenaline or cortisol. Unfortunately, these hormones counter the effect of insulin — sometimes triggering an episode of diabetic ketoacidosis. Pneumonia and urinary tract infections are common culprits.
- **A problem with insulin therapy.** Missed insulin treatments or inadequate insulin therapy can leave you with too little insulin in your system, triggering diabetic ketoacidosis.

The risk of diabetic ketoacidosis is highest if you:

- Have type 1 diabetes
- Frequently miss insulin doses as many Americans do because of the outrageous cost.

Source: Mayo Clinic

In summary, proposing this bill would save more lives and raise more awareness in the community by non-profit organizations such as ADA and JDRF and other nonprofit diabetes organizations such as my own "T1Diabetes Journey Inc" and health care institutions as I see there is lack of education. I founded T1Diabetes Journey Inc. to assist diabetics with their

maintenance journeys and raise diabetes awareness in the community. Since I founded the organization, we have hosted over 6 health fairs and partnered with many organizations sharing the same mission. T1DJ features diabetics sharing their diabetes journey to help increase awareness as well as let others know they are not alone. Our February featured spotlight is a beautiful woman that resides in Indianapolis. She was diagnosed at the age of 5 at the time of her diagnosis she was in DKA.