

**House Bill 64**  
**Testimony in Support of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative**

Gary Dougherty  
Associate Director – State Government Affairs  
American Diabetes Association  
Senate Finance Committee – June 11, 2015

Good morning Chairman Oelslager and Members of the Committee.

My name is Gary Dougherty and I am the Associate Director - State Government Affairs for the American Diabetes Association.

On behalf of the 1.3 million Ohioans with diabetes, as well as the additional 3.1 million with prediabetes, the American Diabetes Association joins with several other partner organizations to strongly urge the Committee to restore the Healthy Food Financing Initiative which had been added to House Bill 64 by the House of Representatives.

Nearly 25 million Americans live in areas known as food deserts, more than two million right here in Ohio, where they have limited access to full-service grocery stores. Food deserts are disproportionately located in rural and urban settings. Individuals and families living in these areas are often left without the ability or the means to purchase nutritious foods to prepare healthy meals, due to factors such as lack of transportation and high prices.

As you know, people need to maintain a healthy diet in order to decrease their risk for obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes. Access to healthy foods is equally important for people who have already been diagnosed with diabetes and must manage their disease carefully to prevent dangerous complications.

Any investment made by the state in the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (the House-passed budget included \$3.5 million) will be used to leverage private funds to support healthy food access in urban and rural low- and moderate-income areas throughout Ohio which will, in turn, help Ohioans lead healthier lifestyles and decrease their risk for chronic disease, including diabetes.

Such an investment would undoubtedly have an impact on the cost of diabetes in our state as well. People with diabetes have medical expenses more than double of those who do not have diabetes.

**Regional Office**

3495 Bear Pointe Circle  
Powell, OH 43065  
Tel: 1-800-676-4065 x4832

**Diabetes Information**

Call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)  
Online: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)  
The Association gratefully accepts gifts through your will.

**The Mission** of the American

Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

Diabetes costs an estimated \$12 billion in Ohio each year. Total direct medical costs for diagnosed and undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetes, and gestational diabetes in Ohio were estimated at \$9.1 billion in 2012. In addition, another \$2.9 billion was spent on indirect costs from lost productivity due to diabetes.

You can surely see why the American Diabetes Association sees the Healthy Food Financing Initiative as a key element in our quest to prevent diabetes in Ohio and to offer those who have diabetes access to healthy foods so they can manage their disease and avoid the terrible complications of heart disease, stroke, amputation, kidney disease, blindness, and even death.

The American Diabetes Association urges you to restore the Healthy Food Financing Initiative in the budget so more Ohioans could benefit from access to fresh and healthy foods.

Thank you very much and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.