

(Copied to Wardens of Simcoe County, Grey County, Dufferin County and Chair, Muskoka District)

Received via Warden Hicks' Email on Wednesday, October 20, 2021

Hi Terry and Jim

Trust this finds you and yours safe and well.

### **Re-Launch of the SFBLF Diabetes Awareness and Prevention Campaign**

We are respectfully seeking your help for the re-launch of our *Youth-onset Diabetes Awareness and Prevention Campaign*. As you know, the Mission of SFBLF is to Fight Diabetes through education, process innovation,

diabetes issues research and advocacy with an emphasis on youth.

We initiated our Diabetes Awareness and Prevention Campaign in 2019 and received unanimous endorsement of Simcoe County Council. The intervention of COVID seriously delayed our progress. However, with the prospect of diminishing COVID impact and schools slowly returning to a degree of 'normalcy', we are gearing up to re-launch our Campaign and with increased reach.

In particular, we are trying to assemble a 'regional coalition' involving District of Muskoka, Grey County, Dufferin County and Simcoe County and including the 8 School Boards and 3 District Health Units operating, in whole or part, within that geography.

Our primary target is the approximately 150,000 school-age children and youth in the described region; all

of which is adjacent to our Diabetes Management and Education Centre at the Banting Homestead Heritage Park in Alliston. Youth and families need to understand their diabetes risk and how to reduce those risks. 40% of people with Type 2 diabetes do not know they have the condition. 70% of Type 2 cases can be prevented or delayed. Our youth are our future and we all need to do what we can to protect them.

As part of our campaign, we intend also to document the existing programs in the region that contribute to diabetes prevention, directly or indirectly, e.g., programs supporting healthy eating, weight control, physical activity for children and youth and support for youth mental health issues. We will be encouraging these programs to include a described connection to prevention of youth-onset diabetes.

Families, service clubs, employers, business improvement associations and Chambers of Commerce will be asked to help enable the awareness program. To that end, SFBLF diabetes risk self-assessment tools, infographics, eLearning courses and other educational resources will be available to all members of the coalition at no cost.

We are seeking your endorsement and support for this renewed effort. While we always need funding help, on this occasion we are seeking help with assembling the coalition, raising awareness and promoting prevention. We will start reaching out to municipal and community leaders in the coming weeks and will publish the list of coalition members on our website as they emerge. We have a very simple 'sign up' form to facilitate that.

### **A Global Imperative**

By way of added context, *Cities Changing Diabetes* is a global program operating on 5 continents and involving close to 40 major cities. The drivers behind that program are Novo Nordisk, Steno Diabetes Centre (Copenhagen) and University College London. The most recent and first Canadian city to join that group is Mississauga.

As yet, that program does not have a 'rural' focus. It is our objective to create the first such 'rural coalition' to rise to the challenge. We believe there is already an impressive inventory of action programs that when focused together along with additional aspects that SFBLF will provide, can create a 'world first' and set an example in terms of concerted rural community engagement and help for the prevention of youth-onset diabetes.

Your support will move us faster toward achieving our goal and illustrating the collective capability and innovation of the region for the world to see.

2021 is the 100th Anniversary of the Discovery of Insulin. November 14 is Banting's birthday and World Diabetes Day. We hope to announce this broad scale community-based initiative on that day to add to the many actions we have already completed in support of the 100th Anniversary, the legacy of Banting and the fight against youth-onset diabetes.

### **Youth-onset Type 2 diabetes impact**

Youth-onset Type 2 diabetes is rising globally. It is initially invisible but progressive and cell damage can be in progress at time of diagnosis. Increasingly, youth-onset diabetes cases are not responsive to the standard therapy of healthy eating, daily exercise and oral medications and soon also require insulin. Delayed diagnosis and hence, treatment, means youth-onset type 2 diabetes can be more severe than youth-onset type 1 and definitely more severe than adult-onset type 2.

Students living with diabetes need special help at school to manage their diabetes safely, prevent or delay complications, be free from bullying and enjoy a full learning experience. Continuity of care is also a challenge. Moving from pediatric to adult healthcare can be daunting and students and their families need help to plan early. If comorbid conditions exist, the transition is even harder, usually requiring help from a multi-discipline team; not an easy requirement for rural locations vs large urban centres.

We hope you will be able to help us.

Many thanks

Stay safe

David

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