

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HJM 4038

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 15, 2006

**Brief Description:** Requesting that certified diabetes educators be added as Medicare providers.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Hinkle, Cody and Santos.

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/08/06, 98-0.

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/15/06 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kastama, Kline and Parlette.

**Staff:** Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

**Background:** Diabetes is a disease where blood sugar levels are elevated due to the pancreas' inability to make or properly use insulin. The two most common types of diabetes are type 1 diabetes (previously called juvenile diabetes) which accounts for approximately 5-10 percent of all cases of diabetes and type 2 diabetes (previously called adult onset diabetes) which comprises approximately 90-95 percent of all diabetes cases.

Type 1 diabetes is a condition where the pancreas is no longer able to produce insulin and primarily affects younger people. Type 2 diabetes is a condition where the body cannot use insulin properly and may occur at any age. It occurs in people who are overweight or have risk factors such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, family history, or certain ethnic backgrounds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that over 20 million people in the United States have diabetes.

There are currently two companion measures relating to diabetes educators pending before Congress. Under these bills, titled the "Diabetes Self-Management Training Act of 2005," the Department of Health and Human Services would allow certified diabetes educators who provide diabetes outpatient self-management training services to be reimbursed by Medicare.

In addition, the Comptroller General of the United States would conduct a study to identify barriers to accessing diabetes self-management training, including economic and geographic barriers as well as access to qualified providers.

**Summary of Bill:** Legislative findings are made expressing the prevalence of diabetes, the cost of diabetes, the benefits of chronic disease self-management plans for diabetes patients, the skills of certified diabetes educators, and the impact of the closure of diabetes education programs at hospitals.

The United States House of Representatives and United States Senate are requested to enact H.R. 3612 and S. 626 which relate to Medicare patients with diabetes.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Testimony For:** The outcomes for persons suffering from a chronic illness such as diabetes is more positive when the person can manage their disease. Certified diabetes educators are able to teach people how to live with diabetes. Currently, certified diabetes educators are not reimbursed under Medicare, although they are reimbursed under Medicaid and through private health insurance. HJM 4038 sends a clear message that certified diabetes educators need full reimbursement under Medicare. This is an important service and should be compensated.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Donna Christensen, Washington Association of Diabetes Educators.