



## **NZSSD MEDIA RELEASE: World Diabetes Day 14 November 2023 - Access to Diabetes Care**

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#### **Issued by the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD)**

In recognition of World Diabetes Day 2023, Aotearoa New Zealand, led by the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD), joins the global community in raising awareness about diabetes, a condition that affects an estimated 300,000 Kiwis. This year's theme, "**Access to Diabetes Care**" underscores the urgent need to address the barriers faced by many in accessing diabetes care and support.

New Zealand has one of the highest rates of diabetes in the developed world, with a significant impact on Māori and Pacific communities. Manatū Hauora reports that these communities are nearly three times more likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes compared to non-Māori, non-Pacific populations, and rates of type 1 diabetes are increasing across all ethnicities.

**101 Years of Insulin and the Ongoing Struggle for Equity in Diabetes Care:** 2023 marks the 101st anniversary of the ground-breaking use of insulin to manage glucose levels in people with type 1 diabetes (T1D). Since then, hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved. However, significant disparities in health and well-being for people with T1D still exist and are widening in Aotearoa New Zealand. Technological advances over the last century, including new insulin delivery methods and more accurate glucose monitoring techniques, have transformed diabetes management. Today we have devices that link glucose levels to insulin doses, functioning as an artificial pancreas. Dr Rosemary Hall, Endocrinologist and President of the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes, describes the current situation "this technology can be life-changing for people with T1D and their whānau, reducing diabetes distress and medical complications. Yet, the stark reality is that in Aotearoa New Zealand, the high cost of this technology means it's out of reach for many, exacerbating the gap between those who can afford it and those who cannot".

**Urgent Need for Funding CGM and Pump Technology for All with Type 1 Diabetes:** The NZSSD emphasises the critical need for the proposed funding for Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) systems and insulin pumps to be fully actualised. Dr Hall says "there is a palpable sense of hope within the diabetes community that these technologies will be funded, and it would be extremely disappointing if it were not". Ensuring that everyone with type 1 diabetes in Aotearoa New Zealand has access to these life-changing devices is not just a matter of improving healthcare but also of fulfilling a promise to our people who are waiting eagerly for these resources.

We urge media outlets, community leaders, and the public to join NZSSD in these efforts to bring attention to the challenges faced by those living with diabetes and to promote a healthier, more informed Aotearoa New Zealand.

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**About the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD):**

The NZSSD is an incorporated society that is open to those involved in the care of people with diabetes. Its members include diabetes specialist physicians, nurse practitioners, diabetes specialist nurses, podiatrists, dietitians, scientists, ophthalmologists, general practitioners, community health workers and researchers.

The NZSSD is the national advisory body and leading diabetes clinical network on clinical and scientific matters. The NZSSD's objectives are to promote the study of diabetes and the best, equitable, standards of care for diabetes in Aotearoa New Zealand.

<https://www.nzssd.org.nz/>

**About World Diabetes Day:** Established by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organization in 1991, World Diabetes Day is celebrated annually on November 14th, the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922. It aims to increase global awareness of diabetes, its escalating rates around the world, the importance of having access to the right information and care to ensure timely treatment and management.