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PRESS RELEASE

World Diabetes Day 2006

World Diabetes Day 2006 – Diabetes Care for Everyone

London, United Kingdom. 14 November 2006 – The **International Insulin Foundation** (IIF) would like to draw attention to the plight of people, especially children, in the developing world with insulin-requiring diabetes. The Foundation's work has shown that it is possible to improve services for people with this disease so that treatment for survival is possible, even in the world's poorest countries. This work is described in an article published in the World Diabetes Day issue of The Lancet (11 November) and a report entitled, "Diabetes Foundation Report on Implementing National Diabetes Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa".

IIF's statement for World Diabetes Day 2006

The official theme of World Diabetes Day 2006 is "Diabetes Care for Everyone" with a special focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. It is estimated that there are 200 million people with diabetes worldwide. For a variety of avoidable reasons, many will die because of lack of access to care.

One such category is children requiring daily insulin for survival. Insulin has been available in developed countries since 1922, but because of its cost people requiring this essential medicine are unable to access it in many settings. Insulin is not the only cost that people with diabetes must meet. In Mali the IIF estimated that on average a person with diabetes living in the capital city needed to spend \$21.24 on diabetes care each month for insulin and care, around two-thirds of a family's income. Insulin makes up half of this total.

In addition to issues of cost, other factors are essential for diabetes care such as trained health workers and the appropriate infrastructure. The IIF through its work in 3 African countries has identified 11 key points needed to implement national diabetes programmes in the Continent. These are:

1. Organisation of the Health System
 2. Data Collection
 3. Prevention
 4. Diagnostic tools and infrastructure
 5. Drug procurement and supply
 6. Accessibility and affordability of medicines and care
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7. Healthcare workers
8. Adherence issues
9. Patient education and empowerment
10. Community involvement and diabetes associations
11. Positive policy environment

An article in the 11 November 2006 edition of The Lancet, written by David Beran, Project Coordinator of the IIF and Professor John S. Yudkin, Chairman of the IIF, highlights these points and reviews the current situation of diabetes in sub-Saharan Africa. More details about these can be found in the "Diabetes Foundation Report on Implementing National Diabetes Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa" which will be launched in December at the IDF 19th World Diabetes Congress in Cape Town. This report is available from: david.beran@access2insulin.org and will shortly be available on <http://www.access2insulin.org>.

What is diabetes?

November 14th 2006 marks the seventeenth annual World Diabetes Day. Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects people of all ages in all areas of the world. Inadequate care can lead to serious health complications such as blindness, kidney failure, neuropathy (degeneration of nerves and nervous system), amputation, heart attacks and death. November 14th was chosen as World Diabetes Day as it is Frederick Banting's birthday. Together with Charles Best, Dr. Banting discovered insulin in October 1921.

Type 1 diabetes is caused by the destruction of insulin producing cells in the pancreas. Insulin is vital for the survival of people with Type 1 diabetes and must be administered daily throughout the life of the patient. It is estimated that there are 5.3 million people worldwide who suffer from Type 1 diabetes, and thus require insulin every day. There is a growing global epidemic of Type 2 diabetes, due to rapid increases in obesity and sedentary behaviour.

The first person to be treated with insulin was a Canadian child, Leonard Thompson, in 1922. Over 80 years later, many people with diabetes in the developing world still have difficulties accessing insulin. This leads to a life expectancy, which can be as low as 12 months for a child in rural sub-Saharan Africa compared to over 50-60 years for a child in Europe.

The IIF was established by leading academics and physicians as a concerted effort to improve the prospects for people with Type 1 diabetes in the world's poorest countries, by improving the supply of insulin and education in its use.

In order to achieve these objectives, a clear analysis of the constraints to insulin access and diabetes care is needed. The IIF's view is that simply increasing the supply of insulin, through donations or other means, is not sufficient and that the root of the problem needs to be solved.

If you would like information about the IIF and its work please contact:

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