

Albert Einstein College of Medicine researcher to brief Congressional staffers on global diabetes

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September 22, 2010 (BRONX, NY) On Monday, September 27, researchers from [Albert Einstein College of Medicine](#) [2] of Yeshiva University will hold a congressional briefing in Washington, D.C., aimed at focusing attention on the alarming global diabetes epidemic. Incidence of diabetes is increasing worldwide at a rate that eclipses most other diseases. The [World Health Organization](#) [3] estimates that by the year 2030, more than 366 million people will be suffering from diabetes, 10 times the number affected by HIV/AIDS. Of that 366 million, more than 298 million will live in developing countries.

"In the developing world, there are tremendous barriers to addressing the global diabetes epidemic," said [Meredith Hawkins, M.D.](#) [4], professor of medicine and director of the [Global Diabetes Initiative](#) [5] at Einstein. Dr. Hawkins, who has travelled globally treating diabetes patients, is eager to provide testimony at the briefing. "There's a lack of awareness by the general population, a lack of knowledge by healthcare providers on how to treat the disease, and no coordinated healthcare policy that would make screening, treatment, and prevention a priority. There are also practical limitations including access to clinical care settings, few resources for treatment, and poorly developed healthcare infrastructure to support chronic and acute treatment. However, despite these grave challenges, the consequences of doing nothing are dire."

Through her extensive diabetes [field work](#) [6] in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Dr. Hawkins has observed many different forms of diabetes including a mysterious and under-recognized form one that is linked to starvation and malnutrition. "People on the ground, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and India, say they are seeing many more cases of diabetes among young and lean individuals compared to 20 years ago," said Dr. Hawkins. This 'malnutrition diabetes' is often misdiagnosed as type 1 diabetes, leading to ineffective and often fatal treatments. And it's believed to affect large numbers of children and young adults in the developing world.

"So little is known about malnutrition diabetes," said Dr. Hawkins, "but it's very clear that what we're seeing is not Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. This is a debilitating, poorly understood form of the disease that strikes those with poor nutrition -- many of them children. We desperately need more research to understand why it occurs, and more research resources to develop effective and practical treatments."

The congressional briefing, expected to be well attended by health and foreign affairs legislative aides of congressional members, will be jointly presented by the Global Diabetes Initiative and the Global Diabetes Alliance. In addition to Dr.

Hawkins, the event will include testimony from Dr. Nihal Thomas, professor at Christian Medical College in Vellore, India, which has developed several highly effective diabetes outreach programs, as well as Dr. Paul Robertson, director of the Global Diabetes Alliance and Dr. Mahmoud Ibrahim, director of the Egyptian Diabetes Center. The briefing will be held in Room B-339 of the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill beginning at 12 noon.

[SOURCE](#) [7]

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