



Local girl boosts appeal for research funding

WASHINGTON — A group of universities, scientists, drug companies and others' turned to a Bellevue girl last Wednesday to help make their case for sustained federal funding of medical research.

Chloe Lamprecht, 12, a student at Lewis & Clark Middle School, was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes five years ago. A booster step helped her reach the microphone at the press conference at the National Press Club.

Chloe said that she expects scientists will find a cure for diabetes in her lifetime, but questioned just how long it might take.

"I know the chances of me going blind or losing a limb grow stronger every day that we don't have a cure, and that scares me," she said.

Chloe was one of the real-life examples cited by the coalition of patients and their families waiting for cures.

The event was organized in part to thank Congress and the Obama administration for including \$10 billion for the National Institutes of Health in the \$787 billion economic stimulus package. But participants also expressed concern that the stimulus funding would be seen as sufficient and that support for research would drop off.

Representatives from the University of Nebraska Medical Center were on hand and also stressed the importance of continued financial support for research.

Mark Bowen, director of government relations for UNMC, said that the medical center has been awarded more than \$9.4 million thus far in biomedical research funding through the stimulus legislation. For example, UNMC's Jennifer Larsen received \$100,000 to help her research into risk factors for heart disease after kidney transplants.

Larsen said supporters must make the case for why medical research is important. Otherwise, people hear about an isolated research project and wonder how it connects to them, she said.

"Too often we think about research, we think about test tubes and laboratories, rats, white coats, but where does it go?" she said. She said that people should understand that in addition to finding cures for diseases, medical research helps discover new approaches to prevention and the most cost-effective treatment options.

She also said that the research funding included in the stimulus bill has led to new jobs and equipment purchases, all of which helps spur on the economy.

For Chloe and her mother, however, the focus was on what research can produce for those suffering from disease.

"It means there's a strong hope for a cure within Chloe's lifetime," Stacy Lamprecht said.

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Photo submitted by Vicky Cerino

Chloe Lamprecht of Bellevue spoke at the National Press Club last week about funding for research of juvenile diabetes, a disease she's had for five years.