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REMARKS BY: TOMMY G. THOMPSON, SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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The National Diabetes Education Program: "Small Big Rewards"

Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you so very much for coming today. I'm glad to be here with all of you to celebrate the launch of a promising new campaign for diabetes prevention.

It's good to see Dr. Fran Kaufman here today. We all appreciate the tireless work you're doing as President of the American Diabetes Association. I'm glad to see Dr. James Gavin as well, and I thank him for all his support as Chairman of the National Diabetes Education Program in helping this program reach the people and communities who need it most. I'm also especially proud to introduce Mr. Robert Huber, who will speak to you in just a moment about his wonderful story.

We're here today because the staggering rise in diabetes is a problem we cannot afford to ignore. Today, at least 17 million Americans have Type 2 diabetes - about one out of every twenty people - and at least 16 million more have the condition known as "pre-diabetes."

These facts are too troubling to disregard and too grim to just accept. Diabetes was once considered a disease of the middle-aged and elderly - but now we're seeing it in our children.

I'm here to tell you that this Administration absolutely refuses to accept the spread of diabetes. We're acting for change, acting boldly and with energy and focus.

As you know, the agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services perform leading-edge research on diabetes. But that research isn't intended only for publication in some dry academic journal. It's designed to lead us to action.

That's why we've come together here today. We've recently had some truly good news about diabetes prevention from a major study conducted through the Diabetes Prevention Program, which is run through our department. This study has showed us that millions of overweight, at-risk Americans can delay and possibly prevent Type 2 diabetes with moderate changes in diet and exercise. And now we're turning this research into a public health movement that will help to halt the alarming growth in diabetes.

So today, I'm proud to announce a new campaign, spearheaded by the National Diabetes Education Program, which will help millions of Americans live longer and healthier lives. It's called "Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes."

This campaign will be a nationwide effort that encourages people of all ages and backgrounds to take some simple steps to prevent diabetes. By partnering with the NDEP's network of more than 200 partners - one of whom, I'm proud to say, is the American Diabetes Association - at the local, state, and national level, we will help people at risk get the information they need.

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Let me say right now how deeply grateful I am for the participation of our partner organizations in the private sector. Some of their representatives are here today. Thank you for coming.

You will play the pivotal role in getting the message of diabetes prevention out to ordinary Americans. You truly are in the front ranks of what the President called "the armies of compassion." Without you, we could not reach nearly as many Americans as we need to, and I thank you so very much for it.

This new effort will also reach out to health care professionals across the country, urging them to identify patients who have pre-diabetes, treat these patients through lifestyle interventions, and, most importantly, stay at it. We need health care providers to join with us in counseling patients over time, again and again, to help make this information stick - and we will give them the tools they need to accomplish this goal.

As a first step in this outreach, I want to preview a 30 second public service announcement, which introduces the concept of preventing diabetes and encourages individuals to take the appropriate Small Steps to garner a Big Reward.

Now I'd like to introduce Dr. James Gavin, Chair of the National Diabetes Education Program and President of the Morehouse School of Medicine...
I'd like to introduce Dr. Fran Kaufman, president of the American Diabetes Association...

Now I'd like to welcome Mr. Robert Huber, who was recruited for the DPP clinical trial by the Washington Hospital Center. We are grateful for Mr. Huber's participation in the study and I'm pleased to have him and Ellen, his wife of 52 years, here with us today.

I'd like to commend the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Diabetes Education Program for all the hard work they've done to prepare this campaign. Thank you for all that you are doing to create a better life for all Americans. I am confident this effort will meet with phenomenal success.

Thanks so much for being here today. May God bless America