

THE Skanner®

Challenging People to Shape
a Better Future Now

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Opinion

Taking Control of Your Health: Diabetes Solutions for Oregon

By **Bernie Foster, Publisher**

There is a saying that information can bring choices and choices bring power – educate yourself about your options and choices. On January 21 at our Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast in Portland, I displayed on screen for everyone there to see the toll-free number to call for information on diabetes. I also mentioned I was leaving for Orlando, Florida later that week to attend the National Newspaper Publish-

ers Association conference where I would be learning more about diabetes and how the increasingly high cost of insulin affects people's ability to afford diabetes treatment. I did not need to travel to Florida to know that here in Oregon understanding our options helps us take better control of our health. When it comes to our health, knowledge is power. Studies show that the diagnosis of diabetes among adults in Oregon has more than doubled over the last 20 years. There are over

287,000 adults with diagnosed diabetes and an estimated 110,000 adults with undiagnosed diabetes. Rates of diabetes among African Americans are 23 percent higher than that of Whites. This is alarming and a cause for concern. Diabetes and pre-diabetes costs are estimated to be \$4 billion in Oregon annually. This includes direct medical expenses for diagnosed, undiagnosed, pre and gestational cases. Direct costs associated with reduced productivity

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from diabetes are estimated at \$840 million per year. Serious health complications include heart disease, stroke, amputation, end-stage kidney disease, blindness – and death according to the American Diabetes Association.

Lawmakers should address the shocking increase in insulin costs of nearly 555 percent from previous years. Oregon legislators should take on the challenge of sky rocketing drug costs through a number of bills being put before the senate this year. The most im-



With the toll-free number in the background, Bernie Foster talks to the audience at The Skanner Foundation MLK Breakfast on Jan. 21 about the Lilly Diabetes Solution Center and Helpline launched by Eli Lilly and Company in the African American community to ensure people receive comprehensive treatment for diabetes.

portant thing our community can do is to stay informed and use the tools provided to us, not to simply survive, but to thrive.

We at *The Skanner News* understand the health disparities in this state, especially concerning diabetes in the African American community. We know that in order to close the gap, we have to engage and inform our readers by providing information directed to our community regarding the best options in diabetes maintenance and affordable diabetes medicine.

Here is what we didn't know. Diabetes patients in Oregon can call the helpline to get some help and representa-

tives will work with them and develop a plan based on patients' needs. Call the Eli Lilly Solutions Center at 833-808-1234. Information includes cost-saving solutions, clinic information, support and short- and long-term options for immediate needs. Lines are open between 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (ET). Other may be doing this too, so be sure to research where else you can find help and information for people suffering from diabetes.

Information will bring you more choices.

When we know more about our options we can do better as it relates to taking control of our health, for knowledge is power!

A Dream Deferred – Is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Just Another Elusive Dream?

In 1951, Langston Hughes laid bare the anxious aspirations of millions of Black people in America with his poem, “A Dream Deferred.” In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded America of the promissory note written to its citizens guaranteeing life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, in his “I Have a Dream” speech.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson attempted to make good on that promise by signing the Civil Rights Act into law. And in 1965, President Johnson sought to ensure equitable access to these unalienable rights by signing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) into law.

As a part of Johnson's “War on Poverty,” ESEA was supposed to assist students of color in receiving a quality education, thereby helping lift them from poverty.

To date, ESEA remains one of the most impactful education laws ever ratified. ESEA established education funding formulas, guided academic standards, and outlined state accountability.

Since Johnson, presidents



Dr. Elizabeth Primas

Progam Manager, NNPA

have re-authorized and/or launched new initiatives safeguarding the intentions of ESEA.

Some of the most notable

“I wonder if we are setting the bar too low

re-authorizations have been “No Child Left Behind” (2001, George W. Bush) and “Race to the Top” (2009, Barack Obama).

The most recent re-authorization, the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) was signed into law by President Obama in 2015.

In previous re-authorizations of ESEA, emphasis was placed on students' ability to pass rigorous standards in order to proceed from one grade to the next. How-

ever, data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that a measurable achievement gap has persisted.

As education leaders review the individual state plans that have been developed and approved in keeping with the Every Student Succeeds Act, it is obvious that many states are making an attempt prioritize equity over performance. Some states have set timelines for their accountability measures, signifying the urgency of the problem, while other states continue to miss the mark by setting goals that are too distant, including the proposal of a twenty-year timetable to close the achievement gap.

I am concerned about ESSA State plans such as these, that pass the buck to future generations of educators and set the bar too low for vulnerable student populations.

In several states, schools that perform in the bottom 5 percent will receive funding to assist in closing the achievement gap. But, again, I wonder if we are setting the bar too low. I am not convinced that assisting schools

in the bottom underperforming 5percent will make a significant impact on closing the achievement gap in any city.

Still, I find hope in the new reporting guidelines outlined in ESSA. ESSA requires State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop school report cards so parents can compare which school is the best fit for their children.

District report cards must include the professional qualifications of educators, including the number and percentage of novice personnel, teachers with emergency credentials, and teachers teaching outside their area of expertise.

States must also report per-pupil spending for school districts and individual schools. Expenditures must be reported by funding source and must include actual personnel salaries, not district or state averages.

Parents must get engaged to hold legislators and educators accountable for their ESSA State Plans.

Read the rest of this commentary at
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