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# BMA

Cymru Wales

**David Rowlands AM,**  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
**CF99 1NA**

1 September 2017

## **Petition P-04-682 Routine Screening for Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People**

**Dear David**

Many thanks for your letter addressed to Dr Philip Banfield regarding the petition on Type 1 Diabetes in Children and Young People received by your committee. I would like to take the opportunity to inform you that I have recently been elected as Chair of the BMA's Welsh Council, succeeding Dr Banfield in this position, and am therefore responding in this capacity.

To begin, I acknowledge the sad circumstances which led to this petition and offer our sincere condolences to the family of Peter Baldwin.

In 2013, BMA Cymru Wales responded to the consultation on the Diabetes Delivery Plan for Wales, and emphasised the importance of early diagnosis and early access to specialist services so that children and young people with type 1 diabetes can lead a normal life as possible.

As you note in your summary of the petition, we consider that the important issue at hand is the raising of awareness of the signs and symptoms of type 1 diabetes. Our members have suggested this is by far the most vital element of early diagnosis rather than routine or universal screening, which is often inappropriate for a condition that is seldom, if ever, completely asymptomatic. The introduction of routine screening could have an impact on resources and also lead to capacity issues within an already stretched primary care arena – this would be an essential consideration in the development of any such programme.

**Cyfarwyddwr Cenedlaethol (Cymru)/National director (Wales):**

Rachel Podolak

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This awareness raising, including enhancing knowledge of the 'Four Ts', cannot be realised by GPs alone. We would suggest that a sustained, properly-resourced awareness campaign featured in schools, community and healthcare settings – targeting parents and carers, teachers, school pupils of all ages, and wider health and social care professionals - is necessary.

Our members working in primary care have informed us that certain GP practices have introduced various systems that encourage early diagnosis of type 1 diabetes. For instance, in one practice young people who could be at risk of type 1 diabetes, particularly those under 16 displaying feverish symptoms or otherwise unwell, are prompted to provide urine samples. This allows for the practice to check for abnormal glucose and ketone levels, and follow-up with further testing if necessary. This example appears to support the spirit of the petition and we would gladly provide further details.

In conclusion, our membership agrees with the intention of the petitioner in seeking to heighten the understanding of type 1 diabetes and its symptoms in order to encourage earlier diagnosis. Therefore, we suggest that investment should be prioritised towards raising awareness of the condition's symptoms.

Yours sincerely



**Dr David Bailey**  
Chair, BMA Welsh Council