

Boy takes battle with diabetes to D.C.

The Chicago Tribune

June 29, 2003

Michael Johnson, 6, is tired of the insulin shots he receives up to five times a day, and now he has gone to Washington to complain about it.

Actually, his mom did most of the talking for him, but that's OK with Michael, who said he hopes to help sway legislators to increase funding for research of type 1 juvenile diabetes.

"He was diagnosed right before kindergarten last year," said his mother, Lesley Parsons of Evanston.

"Immediately he was hospitalized for a few days, and immediately our lives both changed. He thinks it will just go away. I know it's not that simple."

Michael was among 200 children nationwide selected as delegates to attend the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International 2003 Children's Congress last week.

While there, he attended a town hall meeting led by leading health officials, met with U.S. Rep. Jan **Schakowsky** (D-Ill.) and hobnobbed with Mary Tyler Moore, who has lived with type 1 diabetes for 35 years.

This year, delegates thanked lawmakers for approving the Special Juvenile Diabetes Research Program, which resulted in \$750 million in type 1 diabetes research funding over five years.

Michael, who will enter 1st grade at Lincolnwood Elementary School in Evanston in the fall, said his favorite part during the trip was participating in a walk for diabetes.

"I knew that it would be a good experience for him to be around other children and know that he's not alone," Parsons said.