

Larry C. Deeb, MD

Larry C. Deeb, MD, is president, Medicine & Science, of the American Diabetes Association.



1. What is your background?

I graduated from Emory University with a history degree and completed my pediatric internship, residency and pediatric endocrinology fellowship at the University of Minnesota. I have also had a 25-year relationship with the American Diabetes Association (ADA), serving in more than two dozen roles, including chair of the ADA's Council on Diabetes in Youth, chair of the Council on Public Health and most recently president, Medicine & Science. In addition, I serve as medical director for the Diabetes Center at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital and am a clinical professor of behavioral and social medicine at Florida State University.

2. What is the current focus of your research?

At the moment, I am studying the applications of technology to improve diabetes control. I have been working with Dr. Suzanne Johnson (Florida State University, College of Medicine) on a National Institutes of Health trial that looks at managing diabetes in the clinical setting. One of the real issues in diabetes management has been figuring out how to apply disease management in the normal office setting, particularly with young children. We are asking how we can make a difference in the overall diabetes management (ie, helping children make behavioral contracts that they can actually carry out).

Clearly, we need to ensure that diabetic patients and their families can develop disease management skills that complement what is already available in the health care system.

3. What do you believe is the most important initiative that the ADA is involved with?

I am incredibly proud of the volunteers for their initiatives recently, including advocacy efforts that helped to

fight the Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization Act, which was then defeated in the Senate in May. I am also proud of the energy we put into trying to make sure that Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has adequate funding. It always impresses me to see the energy, time and passion that the ADA and the volunteers put in to ensure that adequate health care is delivered to people with diabetes.

4. What do you envision for the future of the ADA?

This year, we are involved in updating our comprehensive plan for the future. My presidency will involve making the hard choices about where we will focus our efforts as a volunteer health agency. Our priorities will remain on research, advocacy and maintaining our role as the authoritative voice for people with diabetes. Part of continuing our strong presence will be through partnerships we plan to develop with the European Association for the Study of Diabetes. We are coming forward with position statements that provide more power. This international collaboration will continue to be the focus of the ADA, because there is power in a stronger presence. We believe this teamwork will help encourage the world to say, "Yes, we are going to take care of people with diabetes."

5. You have been involved with developing several international clinics. Tell about that experience and why you became involved.

As an active member of the Rotary Club, I have been involved with addressing the issue that there are children with diabetes dying all around the world. Anybody dying is unacceptable, but especially as pediatricians, we regard children as the iceberg of health care. What you do not do for your children, you do not do for the future. One of the neat outcomes of this outreach for children with diabetes, has been the mobilization of communities to take better care of all people with diabetes. I am very proud of some of those outcomes. We are reaching out to communities around the world on a local level, and what happens is that they learn about diabetes and they recognize that diabetes is all around them. With more than 200 million people with diabetes in the world, it is a public, national and international disaster that we have got to get in the middle of. ■