For immediate release

Diabetes Advocacy Alliance™ Applauds Inclusion of Diabetes Measure among Leading Health Indicators Announced Today by Healthy People 2020

Washington, DC (November 1, 2011) – The members of the Diabetes Advocacy Alliance™ applaud Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and the Healthy People 2020 program for including a measure of diabetes management and control among the list of Leading Health Indicators announced at a press briefing during the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM), in a report issued in March 2011, suggested an original set of 24 Leading Health Indicators, to serve as measures for gauging the country’s pursuit and achievement of progress toward improved public health by 2020. In today’s announcement, Secretary Sebelius presented her department’s final list of measures, which includes a measure related to diabetes management and control that was not among the original IOM recommendations: Reduce the percentage of people with diabetes with A1C levels above 9.0.

“With nearly 26 million cases, diabetes is one of most prevalent and devastating chronic diseases facing America today and for the foreseeable future,” said Michael Duenas, O.D., Chief Public Health Officer of the American Optometric Association, a DAA member co-chair organization. “It’s essential that measures of diabetes prevention and control be included in any list of indicators of America’s overall health.”

The A1C blood test measures the average blood glucose level for the prior two to three months, and is used by health care providers and their patients with diabetes as a yardstick against which to measure the progress of diabetes treatment regimens. For most, but not all, people with diabetes, health care providers aim to reduce A1C levels to 7.0 or below, trying to get as close as safely possible to normal levels of blood glucose. “By aiming to reduce A1C levels above 9.0, Secretary Sebelius and the Healthy People 2020 program are acknowledging the importance of working with diabetes patients to improve their level of blood glucose control and decrease their chances of suffering the complications of diabetes,” said Tricia Brooks, Director of Changing Diabetes & Public Policy for Novo Nordisk Inc., a DAA member co-chair organization.

The DAA, a Healthy People 2020 Consortium member, is a diverse group of 18 patient advocacy organizations, professional societies, trade associations, nonprofit organizations, and corporations, sharing a common goal to defeat diabetes. Members of the DAA currently include the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Association of Diabetes Educators, American Clinical Laboratory Association, American Diabetes Association, American Dietetic Association, American Optometric Association, American Podiatric Medical Association, Healthcare Leadership Council, Medicare Diabetes Screening Project, National Association of Chain Drug Stores, National Community Pharmacists Association, National Kidney Foundation, Novo Nordisk Inc., Pediatric Endocrine Society, Results for Life, The Endocrine Society, VSP® Vision Care, and YMCA of the USA.
The DAA Web site is available at www.diabetesadvocacyalliance.org.