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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON  
VIDEOTAPE REMARKS TO THE AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION  
MAY 1994**

Thank you, Chairman [Michael] Greene, President [James] Gavin, Senior Vice President [Patricia] Stenger, and all of you at the American Diabetes Association for honoring me with this award in Dr. Koop's name. It's humbling to receive it because Dr. Koop is truly a unique voice when it comes to health care in this country. For many years now, Americans have come to rely on him for his independence, his thoughtfulness, and his courageous leadership on health care issues. And I will do my darndest to live up to his example.

As grateful as I am for this award, I'm even more grateful for the extraordinary work that you and your association do day after day, year after year, to improve the health of our nation. You are the ones who really deserve recognition and applause for your contributions.

One of the things that Dr. Koop cares about -- and that I know you and I care about -- is to make sure we build a system of health care in America that is centered on promoting good health and preventing illness. A system that offers real health security to each of us and our families.

The President's approach to reform does that and more. It will provide guaranteed private insurance to every citizen. And that means comprehensive benefits that can never be taken away for any reason, including for pre-existing conditions, like diabetes.

His approach will allow patients to choose their doctors and health care providers and maintain long, trusting relationships that are built over a lifetime.

It will outlaw unfair insurance practices that too often discriminate on the basis of a person's medical history or age.

It will preserve and strengthen Medicare, so that older Americans who have worked hard all their lives don't have to choose between buying food or medicine.

It will cover prescription drugs, like insulin.

And it will encourage and expand research activities so that we learn more about cures and treatments for illnesses like diabetes.

You know that the total costs related to diabetes now run about \$91 billion a year. If we could find a cure for diabetes -- and I know you have done extraordinary things to promote education and research about it -- we would not only save that money, we would help 13 million Americans afflicted with the disease. And we would cut down on the 4th leading cause of death in this country.

Today, we have an historic opportunity to make real headway with our health care system. In the coming months, Congress will hammer out details of legislation can finally provide health security for every American . . . and that also can help shape a new philosophy of health care in this country.

But we need your help. We need the energy, dedication, and leadership you have shown for 54 years. You are a model of the progress that can be achieved when thoughtful and committed come together with a good goal in mind.

So I hope you will continue your tireless efforts as a voice for the millions of Americans with diabetes, and I also that you will lend your voice and your experience to the effort for health care reform.

For the sake of the tens of millions of Americans who suffer from illnesses, and for the sake of Americans who are healthy today but may not be tomorrow, we cannot afford to waste this historic opportunity.

Thank you very much.

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