

# Joint health checks for CVD and diabetes – Exhibition at the European Parliament

## EVENT REPORT

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*February 28 - March 02, European Parliament, Brussels*

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Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and diabetes are leading causes of death globally. In the EU, more than 60 million people currently live with CVD [i] and 32 million with diabetes [ii]. Of people living with diabetes (PwD), one third are undiagnosed [ii] and between 20 and 40% of heart attacks occur in people previously undiagnosed with CVD [iii]. The longer a person lives with undiagnosed diabetes and/or CVD, the more likely it is that they will develop severe and costly complications. Some studies have found that up to 35% of people living with type 2 diabetes already show signs of complications such as CVD, at the time of diagnosis. [iv]

With 75% of diabetes-related costs deriving from often preventable complications [v] and given the interlinks between diabetes and CVD, joint health checks based on common risk factors for both co-morbidities are a cost-effective way to improve early diagnosis.

From February 28 to March 02, the International Diabetes Federation Europe (IDFE), the [European Diabetes Forum \(EUDF\)](#), the [European Heart Network \(EHN\)](#) and the [European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations \(EFPIA\)](#), organised a joint event for diabetes and CVD at the European Parliament in Brussels, hosted by [MEPs Mobilising for Diabetes \(MMD\\_group\)](#) member, MEP István Ujhelyi.



During this three-day exhibition, policymakers, experts, healthcare professionals, people living with chronic conditions and industry representatives gathered to emphasize the importance of early diagnosis to reduce potentially preventable, life-altering complications and premature mortality and explore the policy changes required to make joint diabetes and CVD health checks a reality.

Exhibition visitors were able to attend panel discussions and to learn key facts on diabetes and CVD and why early diagnosis is essential to prevent long-term complications, improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs.

The exhibition also featured interactive resources and several video testimonials, including one from diabetes advocate, Valerie Humphreys:



Watch the video testimonial [here](#)

## Day one

In his opening address, MEP István Ujhelyi highlighted the importance of early detection and diagnosis for people living with diabetes and CVD and called for EU-wide policy solutions, including a follow-up on the [Diabetes Resolution](#), voted in November 2022, to improve health outcomes across Europe.

Next, European Parliament Vice-President, MEP Marc Angel shared his support for the EU taking a stronger role in protecting the health of European citizens:



“CVD and diabetes represent serious health challenges for every EU Member State, and I strongly believe that we need to devise EU-wide policy solutions to better face these diseases and ultimately save lives. The EU Parliament has underscored in its resolution on prevention, management and better care of diabetes, adopted in November last year, that all NCDs require more attention.”

Read the full speech [here](#)

During the opening ceremony, EUDF Chair, Prof. Stefano Del Prato, and EHN CEO, Birgit Beger, also shared their views on the importance of investing in early detection and prevention of diabetes and CVD to reduce the cost and burden of developing life-altering complications.

Later in the day, MEP Christel Schaldemose, co-chair of the MMD group, and MEP Maria Carvalho, co-chair of the MEP Heart Group, participated in a panel discussion with CVD patient ambassadors, Athanasios Pallidis, John-Paul Corry, and Danique van den Bogert who shared their personal experiences of living with chronic conditions. MEP Schaldemose and MEP Carvalho stressed the need for early diagnosis, more research and better treatment to allow people living with diabetes and CVD to lead long, happy and healthy lives.



## Day two

EUDF Vice-President and EASD President, Prof. Chantal Mathieu, provided an overview of the risk factors for developing diabetes and shared key insights on what is needed to embed health checks in national health systems for the early detection of all types of diabetes and CVD.

Prof. Dr. Francesc Xavier Cos Claramunt, Chairman of Primary Care Diabetes Europe (PCDE), highlighted the importance of engaging people living with diabetes, CVD and other chronic conditions as full partners in their care.

MEP Ujhelyi invited all citizens and stakeholders to unite and raise their voice to call on policy makers for more action on health.

Prof. Chantal Mathieu concluded the session by highlighting that interventions aimed at improving early detection of diabetes and CVD should not only be evaluated on their cost-effectiveness but also on the impact they make on the quality of life of individuals.



## Day three

IDF Europe Director, Strategy and Policy, Sabine Dupont, moderated a session with diabetes advocate, Javier García Martínez, and Team Novo Nordisk athlete & diabetes ambassador, Becky Furuta, who shared their personal experiences of being diagnosed with diabetes.



Javier García Martínez highlighted the importance of providing support and education to PwD and their families at the time of diagnosis and throughout the life course. He also stressed the key role that can be played by peer support and national diabetes associations in helping PwD learn how to manage and deal with their condition.

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*I was diagnosed when I was four years of age, and my parents had a lot of questions about how to manage the condition and how to avoid the development of complications. These remained unanswered at the time. It would be much easier for families to help their children deal with the condition if they received more information about diabetes management at the time of diagnosis.*

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Becky Furuta also stressed the importance for PwD to be made an active part of the diagnosis and treatment process, to have access to diabetes education and to be given the opportunity to ask questions to their healthcare professionals.

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*At my diagnosis I was able to ask questions and discuss different treatment modalities. Ultimately, I was very well-managed from the start of my diagnosis. My mother, on the other hand, was diagnosed at a very late stage when she had already developed several complications. She couldn't make decisions about her treatment and care. She didn't have the opportunity to ask questions and engage.*

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As key policy asks, both advocates stressed the need for improving access to the technologies for diabetes management that best fit the needs of each person living with the condition.

During the closing session of the event, MMD member, MEP Franc Bogovic, shared his personal experience of being recently diagnosed with T2D. He highlighted the importance of health checks for early diagnosis and the key role of access to information and diabetes education to learn how to optimally manage the condition and avoid the development of complications.

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*When I was diagnosed with T2D I had the chance to have a very good conversation with my doctor who was able to provide me with a lot of information and resources and he explained very well to me how to manage the condition. This motivated me to follow his advice and I was able to make good progress.*

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