

Testimony from Dr. Ralph Eccles of Klamath Falls, OR

Currently, the State designates those citizens with intelligence at or below the 3rd percentile as developmentally disabled and eligible for special services. The courts can also exercise a supervisory and protective role for these individuals. There is no question that these individuals need special protection and are very vulnerable. These are individuals with an IQ below 70.

Those individuals at or below the 10th percentile present a special challenging situation, especially if they have serious chronic medical conditions. These are individuals with an IQ below 80.

Individuals with an IQ from 70-80 are especially vulnerable. Persons with an IQ below 70 are either gravely disabled, or have been protected and recognize the need for continued support as they are impaired enough that the impairment is obvious, often even to themselves. Persons with an IQ from 80-90 recognize that they often will need assistance and will have difficulty with challenging activities and will seek assistance. Individuals with an IQ from 70-80 are not able to recognize their own deficiencies and do not seek assistance. These individuals are easily victimized and have very poor judgment.

When such an individual has a complex medical condition, such as type 1 diabetes or other condition that requires frequent monitoring and adjustment in medication, successful self-management is not possible. As a result, these individuals have multiple complications from the comorbidities of their diseases and frequently end up in the hospital or emergency department. All of this is a serious financial burden on the taxpayer.

I have a patient with an IQ of 65, who is able to live in a special apartment, have visits from social services twice weekly and attends a sheltered workshop. He enjoys being productive to society and having the social life of special sports teams. His diabetes is fairly well controlled in this supervised environment and he has only mild complications and has never needed to visit the emergency room or be admitted to the hospital because of his diabetes. The same is true of another patient with Down's syndrome and Type 1 Diabetes.

I have 4 patients with Type 1 Diabetes and IQ's from 70-80. These patients are not doing well. Frequently they are in the hospital. A fifth patient died two years ago. Both of the female patients have been victimized on multiple occasions and another patient was convinced by a drug dealer that methamphetamine would cure his diabetes.

I am most familiar with diabetes, which is very difficult to manage, even for individuals of normal intelligence, but there are other diseases such as congenital heart disease and some kinds of epilepsy and asthma where complex medical regimens are indicated, however diabetes is a very common (and growing - yes Type 1 (juvenile) is growing too), complex disease that requires support for all patients, but especially those of subnormal intelligence (below 80).

Hopefully this is helpful.

Sincerely,

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Diabetologist