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Research Result Summaries

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Supporting the Transition to Adulthood with Type 1 Diabetes in a University Setting

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Principle and Co-Investigators

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Transitioning to adulthood is a challenging period for individuals with type 1 diabetes, especially those attending post-secondary education at a university or college. In addition to balancing academic responsibilities and adapting to a novel environment, young adults (YA) with type 1 diabetes must more independently manage the daily demands of diabetes care. Qualitative data addressing the transition of students with type 1 diabetes into a post-secondary education setting was collected from multiple stakeholders. A total of 15 participants were interviewed: three diabetes educators/providers, four parents of YAs with type 1 diabetes, and eight YAs with type 1 diabetes. Reflexive thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews revealed four major themes and 11 subthemes. The four major themes include: inappropriateness of services available to support students with type 1 diabetes in post-secondary education settings, individuals with type 1 diabetes having to compensate for inadequate systems, variability of social support effectiveness, and the need for a more holistic approach to improve diabetes education and social support systemically. The study identifies some key systemic barriers experienced by post-secondary students with type 1 diabetes. Future research needs to extend the sample populations to understand a wider range of post-secondary student experiences. The findings from the current study provide initial recommendations to develop new post-secondary educational readiness interventions for YAs with type 1 diabetes.