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APRIL 6 IS DIABETIC PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY AWARENESS DAY State House and Senate recognize important health issue for Arizonans

PHOENIX (March 31, 2010) – The Arizona Legislature today recognized April 6 as Arizona Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy (DPN) Awareness Day in conjunction with the Neuropathy Action Foundation, and mirroring the national month of foot health awareness established by the American Podiatric Medical Association.

DPN is a serious condition that results from damage to nerves due to prolonged exposure to high amounts of glucose in the bloodstream as a result of diabetes. It often results in pain or numbness in the feet, but also manifests itself in intense pain often described as aching, tingling, burning and numbness, but because DPN damages nerve fibers, virtually any nerve in the body can be affected.

HCR2065 was spearheaded by Rep. Cloves C. Campbell, Jr. (D-Dist. 16) and Sen. Leah Landrum Taylor (D-Dist. 16). "This is an important awareness effort for all Arizonans," said Campbell. "DPN is a disabling condition that many suffer from in Arizona. Educating our citizens, especially those with diabetes, about seeing a doctor regularly is an important cause that I stand behind."

More than half of all diabetics suffer from DPN. In the U.S., African Americans are 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites, and Hispanic/Latino Americans are 1.8 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites. In Arizona, nearly 23 percent of Native Americans over the age of twenty have been diagnosed with noninsulin-dependent diabetes making this awareness day that much more important.

The leading cause of amputations in the U.S., DPN causes as much as 40 to 60 percent of lower extremity amputations, with the African American, Latino and Native American diabetic populations at twice the rate of the diabetic white population. In the United States, more than 50,000 diabetes-related amputations are performed each year, but comprehensive foot care programs can reduce amputation rates by 45 to 85 percent.

"DPN is preventable only to the extent that the underlying cause is preventable," said Sen. Landrum Taylor. "Patients must be aware of what is going on within their own body and advocate for their own healthcare. Open access to treatment is of the utmost importance. It is up to each individual to recognize the symptoms of peripheral neuropathy and seek early diagnosis to find out what their treatment options are."

Symptoms of DPN include intense pain often described as aching, tingling, burning and numbness. If these symptoms occur, Arizonans should consult their physicians. For more information about Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy visit the Neuropathy Action Foundation's Web site at www.neuropathyaction.org.

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