

# PROFILE Diabetes Briefing

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## Warner Bros. Studio Lot Hosts EIC “First Draft” Diabetes Briefing

Los Angeles: July 11, 2006 – The Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC) offered a briefing on diabetes to producers, executives and researchers on July 11 at Warner Bros. studios. The lunch meeting was held in the fine dining room in the studio’s executive dining facility. Studio Chef Ron Davies prepared a diabetic-friendly menu for the attendees, who included representatives from all the major networks, including ABC, CBS, FOX & NBC, as well as various filmmakers.

Among the attendees were Suzy Adlen and Jan Alind, both with CBS; Jeanette Jones, Cheryl McDowell, Julia Piecano and Janella Tandoc from FOX; Darlene Lieblich-Tipton from FOX Cable Networks Group; Judith Lotz from NBC; and Joseph Love from ABC.

Dr. Andrew Drexler, Director of Gonda Diabetes Center and Co-Chief of UCLA’s Division of Clinical Endocrinology, Diabetes and Hypertension, provided a presentation on the current state of diabetes type II and the latest advancements in treating the disease.

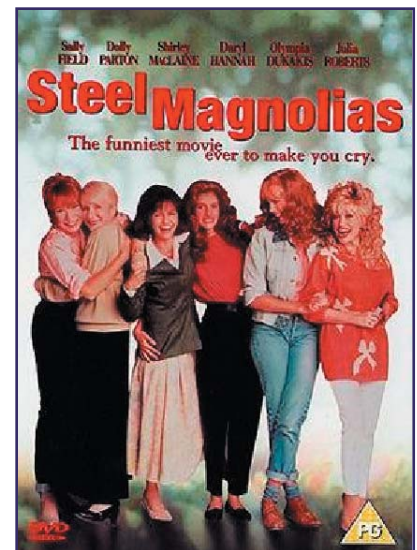
One of the myths that Dr. Drexler cleared up involved the classic film “Steel Magnolias”, which many people refer to when asked for an example of how Hollywood has addressed the issue of diabetes. In the film the character portrayed by Julia Roberts suffers from diabetes type II and is told as a young adult that she should not have children.

As a result of her having a child anyway, she ultimately dies from complications of giving birth.

This story is based on playwright Robert Harling’s sister, who went through a similar situation, but her story actually took place in the 1950s. By the time the motion picture was made in the late 1980s, treatments were available which would have prevented her ultimate death.

Another speaker at the briefing was Priscilla Jesudasson, who is a Diabetes Education Specialist with Kaiser Permanente. She lives with diabetes type II. Ms. Jesudasson spoke of her own experiences with the disease, which has afflicted both of her parents and her sisters also.

Chef Davies spoke about the ways in which menus can be made healthier for people with diabetes. The use of sugar substitutes is invaluable to cooking, as is reduced fat and sodium



*Steel Magnolias* explored the dramatic interest inherent in a devastating and widespread health issue by challenging what people know about diabetes, showing how devastating the disease can be and getting people talking about how manageable it is for many today. However, without proper attention to one’s health, a person with diabetes might face the same health consequences as Julia Roberts’s character in the film. © Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. *Steel Magnolias* is available on home DVD.

Continued from page 1

intake. The chef explained that while carbohydrates must be monitored, Diabetics still need small amounts in their diets. To offset this, he uses small portions of starches such as potatoes & rice. And to keep a watch on sodium he avoids using store bought soups and stocks in his recipes and substitutes homemade chicken and beef stock.

Writers, researchers, producers and other entertainment professionals can find a wealth of information about diabetes at EIC Online, [www.eiconline.org](http://www.eiconline.org). EIC's *First Draft* diabetes briefing was supported by Pfizer Inc.

Among the findings that Dr. Drexler presented to the audience was that, as of 2005, according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, about 20.8 million people—7 percent of the population—have diabetes. Of those people, about 6.2 million are undiagnosed. The disease and its complications are also a major cause of death in the U.S., and account for 1/3 of all deaths nationally. In 1997, the U.S. spent 28 million dollars on the disease and this year that number has jumped to 140 million dollars, or 25% of all of Medicare expenses nationwide. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness and is responsible for 50% of all amputations. In 1990 diabetes rates in the U.S. were 4% to 6% of the population; by 2010 they are expected to reach 10%. There are two types of diabetes: type I, which has an autoimmune component; and type II, which is more commonly associated with obesity.

Type II diabetes starts with insulin resistance, then the body begins to produce more insulin until it can't produce enough, which then leads to the onset of diabetes type II. Exercise and weight control have proven to reduce the incidences of diabetes type II by 58%. Insulin has been a mainstay treatment since it was developed for use with diabetes in 1922. Since 2005, new options have been introduced to help control diabetes. In the last year, both incretin mimetics (a class of drugs that helps improve blood sugar control) and inhalable insulin have become available. As with all disorders, no existing course of treatment should be changed without consulting a physician. Any person experiencing diabetic symptoms should consult a physician immediately. Under no circumstances should a person self-diagnose diabetes or attempt treatment without the supervision of a doctor.

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