

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 22, 2010

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, Education and  
Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

With your Subcommittee's leadership, Congress has worked to provide equitable graduate medical education funding for our nation's independent children's teaching hospitals through the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education Program (CHGME). We respectfully urge you to continue your support for our nation's children's hospitals by providing full-authorized funding – \$330 million – for the CHGME program in Fiscal Year 2011.

In 2006, Congress reauthorized CHGME through FY 2011 with overwhelming bipartisan support. The program was funded at \$317.5 million for FY 2010, and President Obama has maintained that level of funding in his FY 2011 budget request. Fully funding CHGME at its authorized level of \$330 million for FY 2011 would provide the children's hospitals with GME support that is equitable to the federal support that other teaching hospitals receive through Medicare.

Congress created the CHGME program in 1999 to correct an unintended inequity in the GME financing system that had come to depend on Medicare, leaving out children's hospitals. The hospitals were at a serious financial disadvantage, receiving less than 0.5 percent of the federal GME support of other teaching hospitals. CHGME has been an extremely successful investment in training our nation's pediatricians. This program now provides independent children's teaching hospitals with approximately 80 percent of the federal GME support received by other hospitals through Medicare.

Independent children's hospitals have an indispensable role in children's health. They train a large portion of the pediatric workforce, almost 35 percent of all pediatricians and half of all pediatric specialty fellows, the great majority of pediatric researchers and many other physicians requiring pediatric training. Unfortunately the need for a strong pediatric

workforce still exists. A recent survey conducted by the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions found that significant shortages in a multitude of pediatric subspecialties pose challenges to children's access to timely care by contributing to vacancies in children's hospitals that commonly last 12 months or longer.

The financial support through training programs such as CHGME has allowed children's hospitals to address the large gap that still exists with respect to supply and demand in many specialty areas. Thanks to CHGME, children's hospitals have been able to sustain and improve their teaching programs, allowing them to expand their training and reverse a decline in pediatric residencies that began in the 1990s. Together, CHGME-recipient hospitals have accounted for more than 65 percent of the growth in pediatric specialist training.

By directly strengthening children's hospitals' training programs, CHGME has also indirectly strengthened their roles as pediatric centers of excellence, the safety net for low-income children and the leading centers of pediatric research. In short, CHGME benefits the health of all children by helping children's hospitals to sustain their many services.

CHGME is integral to ensuring a stable future for our children's hospitals and the pediatric workforces. It is also a sound investment in the health of all children. Thank you for the Subcommittee's past support for CHGME and we ask that you to continue the progress that has been made for many years in CHGME by appropriating Congress' full authorization of \$330 million in the FY 2011 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Senator Sherrod Brown



Senator Christopher S. Bond



Bill Nelson

Allen Jett

Joe Lill

George V. Kinovich

Dianne Feinstein

Herb Kohl

Frank R. Lautenberg

Al Franken

Chuck Sch

Jim Durkin

Amy Klobuchar

Pellicci Stenow

Nat Roberts

Samuel L. Haka

Blanch L. Lincoln

Lamar Alexander

John F. Kerry

Paul Leri

Bob Carey, Jr.

Robert W. Bunn

Tom Kampen

Chris Dodd

Sally Claubkin

Fay Bailey Hitchcock

Maria Carbone

John Thorne

Nora Fein

John Corry

Jeanne Shaker

Robert Menendez

Jack Reed

Come McCasill

Barbara Bofe

Mark R Werner

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Olympe Snow

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_