

Protect Children's Health: Fund Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME)

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program protects children's access to high-quality pediatric care by providing freestanding children's hospitals with funding to support the training of pediatric providers, much as Medicare supports training in adult teaching hospitals. Today, we urge you to protect this important program, which has a long record of success and bipartisan support, and provide \$317.5 million in funding for CHGME in FY 2013.

We thank the House for its longstanding support of CHGME. We also appreciate the difficult budgetary climate and the pressure to control spending. However, CHGME is an essential investment in our children's health care – in prevention and primary care, health care for vulnerable and underserved children, and access to care for all children. Nearly half (49 percent) of all pediatric residents are trained by CHGME recipient hospitals.

Overall, 51 percent of pediatric specialists are trained at CHGME hospitals, and in many specialties, such as pediatric surgery or critical care medicine, over 65 percent of physicians are trained at these children's hospitals. The program has been a major success, enabling children's hospitals to sustain and grow their teaching programs and expand the diversity of their training experiences in response to local and national needs.

Unfortunately, the President's FY 2013 budget proposed a cut of 65 percent for CHGME from the current annual funding level. We believe that this would be a major step backwards for children's health and detrimental to our nation's goals of strengthening the primary care workforce and ensuring timely access to necessary, high-quality specialty care. Even at CHGME's current level, children's hospitals struggle to train enough pediatricians and pediatric specialists to keep up with growing demand. While much has been achieved under CHGME, much remains to be done.

Although CHGME is a relatively small program, its impact on children's health care is enormous. Again, we understand that these are tough budgetary times, but what our nation cannot afford is to further jeopardize children's access to physicians trained to meet their unique needs. We respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue its history of

bipartisan support for the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program and include \$317.5 million in funding in the FY 2013 Labor-HHS appropriations bill for this vital program.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Board of Pediatrics
American Pediatric Society
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Pediatric Program Directors
Children's Hospitals Association
Council of Pediatric Subspecialties
Organization of Children's Hospitals Surgeons-in-Chief
Society for Pediatric Research