

Nancy Johnson



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2006

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House OKs Johnson Child Health Proposal

Program "Vital" to Pediatric Training, Says CT Children's Hospital

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. House overwhelmingly passed Congresswoman Nancy Johnson's proposal to extend a crucial pediatric medical training program at independent hospitals like Connecticut Children's.

"Healthy kids depend on a well-trained corps of pediatricians," said Johnson, Chairman of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee. "This bill supports our children's hospitals and makes sure they can train the doctors that care for our kids. I'm so pleased the House has passed this vital measure and I will continue working to see that it gets passed into law."

The House passed the "Children's Hospital GME Support Act of 2006" by a 421-4 vote late yesterday. The bill, which Johnson first introduced in 2004, extends the federal Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program through 2010. The bill approves \$300 million for pediatric training at children's hospitals this year.

"Congresswoman Nancy Johnson continues to play a critical leadership role as a champion for children on the issue of funding graduate medical education," said Martin J. Gavin, President and CEO of Connecticut Children's Medical Center. "CHGME has been a great success and thanks to the funding it provides, independent children's teaching hospitals including CCMC have been able to substantially strengthen their training programs in the past five years."

Johnson was an original author of the law that created the CHGME program in 1999. A resounding success, the program has increased pediatric residencies and helped alleviate the financial burdens that independent children's hospitals face.

The Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford reports that the program has helped it increase the number of pediatric residents by 31 percent since 2000. According to the American Board of Pediatrics, the number of residents at independent children's hospitals declined by 13 percent prior to the CHGME program. Since then, that number has increased 18 percent across the nation.

"By extending this program, we preserve crucial health services for children, especially low-income kids and those with serious illnesses," Johnson said. "Children's hospitals

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provide hospital care for 40 percent of the children covered by Medicaid, and they provide the majority of hospital care for children with serious illnesses like cancer.”

While representing one percent of all hospitals, independent children's hospitals train nearly one-third of all pediatricians and almost half of pediatric specialists. Johnson introduced the bill in 2004 as the “Children's Hospital Education Equity and Research Act” (the CHEER Act).

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