

# Nancy Johnson



---

Fifth District, Connecticut

[www.house.gov/nancyjohnson](http://www.house.gov/nancyjohnson)

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 11, 2005

**Contact:** Brian Schubert

(202) 225-4476

## **Johnson Bill Supports Children's Health Care**

*Legislation Saves and Extends "Vital" Pediatric Training Program*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Nancy Johnson has introduced legislation to extend a crucial pediatric medical training program at independent children's hospitals.

"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."

Johnson's bill, the *Children's Hospital Education Equity and Research Act* (the CHEER Act), extends the federal Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program through 2010. The program is set to expire at the end of this year and needs congressional re-authorization. The CHEER Act authorizes \$330 million for pediatric training for FY2006.

"We are grateful to Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, who has been a tireless champion for children on the issue of funding graduate medical education," **said Larry M. Gold, President and CEO of Connecticut Children's Medical Center.** "The CHEER Act corrects the inequity in funding training programs for pediatric resident physicians at children's hospitals. This funding is vital to our mission of training the doctors of the future who will care for our children and grandchildren."

While representing one percent of all hospitals, independent children's hospitals train nearly one-third of all pediatricians and almost half of pediatric specialists.

Created in 1999, the CHGME program has enjoyed bipartisan support and has been a resounding success. It has increased pediatric residencies and helped alleviate the financial burdens that independent children's hospitals face. According to the American Board of Pediatrics, the number of residents at independent children's hospitals declined by 13 percent prior to enactment of the CHGME program in 1999. Since then, that number has increased 18 percent.

"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 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."

Johnson reintroduced the CHEER Act (H.R. 1246) Thursday. It was first introduced last year.

###