

February 8, 2021

Dear Senator,

Thank you for your leadership and efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic as well as advance children's health policy. In addition to my gratitude, I write to request your consideration of additional legislative opportunities to improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents in the COVID-19 package.

As you know, Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Fla., along with over 80 other care facilities across five states. Nemours delivers pediatric primary, specialty, and urgent care to children from all 50 states. In addition to clinical care, we provide research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to children and adolescents. We also have a child-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org. We are striving to create the healthiest generations of children.

As the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress takes up the difficult task of leading a national recovery effort, we urge you to consider immediate priorities to mitigate the ongoing COVID-19 crisis as well as broader policies to address child poverty and health system transformation, both of which are increasingly important and critical areas as we consider long-term pandemic recovery. Together, these interconnected domains will help to sustain and strengthen the safety net for children and their families, and ensure our health care system remains ready to serve them when necessary.

### Immediate Needs

We believe the most pressing health-related priorities in the next COVID-19 package are: a robust and equitable public health strategy for COVID-19 testing and vaccination; identifying and addressing the social, emotional and mental health impacts of the pandemic; continued relief for health care providers and Medicaid programs; and funding to support ongoing research.

**Public Health:** A robust testing and vaccination strategy is needed to address safe school and child care reopening for children as well as safe return-to-work supports for parents. More work should be done to ensure children receive routine vaccinations, are included in COVID-19 vaccine trials and are vaccinated safely. We know that children and families of color are more likely to be hospitalized and suffer severe illness related to COVID-19. We recommend support for researching and addressing these racial and ethnic disparities in order to provide greater opportunity for all children and families to have equitable access to social, economic and health care recovery. One existing opportunity to advance this priority is the Community Immunity During COVID-19 Pandemic Act, which would provide funding to state and local public health departments to develop, scale and evaluate local initiatives to boost vaccination rates during the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge inclusion of this bill in the next COVID-19 package.





states through the provision of Technical Assistance and funding to develop, test and refine pediatric value-based payment models that address social determinants of health, especially at a time when children and families are facing such great social and economic challenges.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Daniella Gratale, Director of the Office of Child Health Policy and Advocacy at 202-425-5805 or [daniella.gratale@nemours.org](mailto:daniella.gratale@nemours.org). Nemours stands ready to partner with you to create the healthiest generations of children.

Sincerely,



Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS  
EVP, Chief Population Health Officer  
Nemours National Office of Policy & Prevention