



CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

Champions for Children's Health

401 WYTHE STREET
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314
P 703-684-1355
F 703-684-1589

6803 WEST 64TH STREET
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66202
P 913-262-1436
F 913-262-1575

November 11, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Ranking Member Waxman:

On behalf of over 220 of the nation's children's hospitals, I am writing to urge House passage of S. 252, as amended by the House. This bill would advance two important priorities for children's health: enactment of the National Pediatric Research Network Act and the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early (PREEMIE) Reauthorization Act.

The National Pediatric Research Network Act would enhance the national commitment to pediatric research by authorizing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to competitively select pediatric research consortia, each of which would be comprised of multiple institutions and focused on a specific research agenda from basic to translational research. As you know, children are not just "small adults." They require highly-specialized care and equally specialized research. Despite children accounting for nearly 20 percent of our nation's population, the NIH has historically invested a far smaller percentage of research dollars – between five and 10 percent – in pediatric biomedical research. As a result it is far more difficult to attract new researchers into the field of pediatrics, launch and sustain basic and translational research endeavors and, ultimately, improve the health of our nation's children by developing safe and effective therapies and treatments. The National Pediatric Research Network Act would help provide the infrastructure – including training and support for younger investigators – that is needed to advance the field for decades to come.

The original PREEMIE Act (P.L. 109-450) brought the first-ever national focus to prematurity prevention. Preterm delivery can happen to any pregnant woman, and in more than half the cases the underlying causes are unknown. Preterm birth is the leading cause of neonatal death, and those babies who survive are more likely to suffer from intellectual and physical disabilities. Since enactment of the PREEMIE Act in 2006, the preterm birth rate has declined, and now stands below 12 percent for the first time in nearly a decade. The PREEMIE Reauthorization Act will continue to fuel our progress by supporting federal research and promoting known interventions and community initiatives. Reauthorizing the PREEMIE Act is critical to protect and maintain the current federal preterm birth-related activities and lay the foundation for future investments.

The Children's Hospital Association is pleased to offer its support of S. 252, and hopes Congress will enact this important legislation. On behalf of our member hospitals, thank you for your continued commitment to improving children's health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Kaufman".

Jim Kaufman
Vice President, Public Policy
Children's Hospital Association