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March 1, 2013

The Honorable Mike Rogers
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rogers:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I write to express our support for H.R. 307, the *Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act of 2013*.

Representing twenty-five percent of the U.S. population, children are not little adults. Their developing minds and bodies place them at disproportionate risk during a disaster situation. Children are particularly vulnerable to aerosolized biological or chemical agents because they breathe more times per minute than adults and they are more vulnerable to agents that act on or through the skin because their skin is thinner and they have a larger surface-to-mass ratio than adults. Children need different dosages of medicine than adults, not only because they are smaller, but also because certain drugs and biologics may have different or unanticipated effects on developing children. From needles and tubing, to oxygen masks and ventilators, to imaging and laboratory technology, children need medical equipment that has been specifically designed for their size and unique physiology.

Numerous expert bodies including the National Commission on Children and Disasters and the National Biodefense Science Board (NBSB) have found that, with respect to medical countermeasures (MCMs) for children, significant gaps remain in pediatric indications, dosages and formulations. H.R.307 includes several important provisions that will help advance the development of MCMs for children by maximizing existing pediatric drug testing laws, increasing pediatric expertise at federal agencies involved in MCM development and procurement, and prioritizing children within the existing Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures Enterprise. Additionally, the expansion of existing emergency use authorization authority will be critical to ensuring that countermeasures for children are stockpiled in advance of a disaster or emergency.

In particular, the Academy thanks you for including a provision that will require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters. With the termination of the National Commission on Children and Disasters, which helped focus attention on gaps in disaster planning and delivered practical recommendations to the President and Congress, the National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters will help ensure that important progress made at various federal agencies, state and local levels, and throughout the private sector continues. Importantly, the Advisory Committee will bring together federal and non-federal partners to provide guidance and recommendations on our nation's preparedness to meet the needs of children before, during and after all-hazards emergencies. It is our hope that the Advisory Committee will comprehensively assess progress toward fulfilling the recommendations of the National Commission on Children and Disasters. The Academy looks forward to working with you and the Department of Health and Human Services to establish the National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters.

H.R. 307 maintains the important role of the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) while ensuring that the NDMS takes into account pediatric populations. It also ensures that the requirements for the Hospital Preparedness Program and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement Program have specific pediatric performance measures. The AAP applauds the requirement in the legislation that the NBSB include an individual with pediatric subject matter expertise.

Thank you for your continued commitment to improving the health and well-being of children. We look forward to working with you on passage of H.R. 307.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas K. McInerney, MD".

Thomas K. McInerney, MD, FAAP
President

cc The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Henry Waxman

TKM/aam