Leading Children's Health Groups Urge Congress to Act on Maternal and Child Health

Joint advocacy effort targets maternal mortality, health equity

WASHINGTON, DC (December 6, 2021) – Nemours Children's Health, March of Dimes, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago are urging congressional passage of pending legislation to reduce the nation's high maternal mortality rate and providing equitable access to high-quality care for mothers and children.

"Creating the healthiest generations of children requires going beyond high-quality clinical care. It also requires reducing health disparities that impact the children and families we serve," said R. Lawrence Moss, MD, FACS, FAAP, president and CEO of Nemours Children's Health. "We need bold federal policies with wide-reaching impact to achieve generational change. These policies are exactly what our nation's children need."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the developed world at 20 per 10,000. The maternal health crisis is particularly dire for women of color with significant disparities in outcomes for Black, Native American, Hispanic, and Asian/Pacific Islander mothers.

The four children's health advocates asked Congress to support the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act and the Black Maternal Health "Momnibus" Act. The groups said that both measures would provide better access to high-quality, holistic maternal health care, while also addressing the social, economic, and community drivers of these health disparities. The Build Back Better Act, which passed the House but awaits Senate action, includes short-term funding for elements of the "Momnibus."

Their call for action came during the second Hot Topics in Neonatology: Cindy Pellegrini Maternal & Child Health Advocacy Event. The event featured a discussion on both pieces of legislation by 85 participants representing 21 states. The participants then met with congressional offices to implore action to support better health outcomes for mothers and children.

"March of Dimes is leading the fight to improve the health of all moms and babies. We cannot bring real change alone and it's only through partnership efforts like today's Cindy Pellegrini Maternal & Child Health Advocacy Event that we can achieve comprehensive policy change to improve maternal and child health. We're honored to support Cindy's legacy by fighting against long-standing health disparities that have put Black women at an increased risk of higher rates of maternal mortality and morbidity," said Stacey D. Stewart, President & CEO, March of Dimes. "That is why we have joined together to push for two key pieces of legislation – the Black Maternal Health Momnibus Act and the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act – that will make a real difference in improving the quality of care for mothers and their babies and thereby improve children's long-term health and wellness."

The Cindy Pellegrini Maternal & Child Health Advocacy Event is named in honor of Cindy Pellegrini who passed away in 2019. Pellegrini was a widely respected advocate who dedicated her life to improving the health and well-being of children and their families by working tirelessly to advance federal, state, and local policies on behalf of women and babies.

For more information, visit www.hottopicsinneonatology.org/.

About Nemours Children's Health
Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, including two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of nearly 75 primary and specialty care practices. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, Nemours KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families, and communities it serves.

About March of Dimes
March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies. We support research, lead programs and provide education and advocacy so that every family can have the best possible start. Building on a successful 80-year legacy, we support every pregnant person and every family.

Visit marchofdimes.org or nacersano.org for more information. Visit shareyourstory.org for comfort and support. Find us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram and Twitter.

About Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) is the nation's first hospital devoted exclusively to the care of children. Since our start in 1855, CHOP has been the birthplace for countless breakthroughs and dramatic firsts in pediatric medicine. Built on a foundation of delivering safe, high-quality, family-centered care, the Hospital has fostered medical discoveries and

innovations that have improved pediatric healthcare and saved countless children's lives. Today, families facing complex conditions come to CHOP from all over the world, and our compassionate care and innovation has repeatedly earned us a spot on the *U.S. News & World Report*'s Honor Roll of the nation's best children's hospitals.

About Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
As a regional specialty hospital, Lurie Children's has the privilege of caring for critically ill and injured children who come to us from every corner of Illinois, 44 other states and 47 countries. We are the largest pediatric provider in the region. Our medical staff includes more than 1,800 physicians and allied health professionals in 70 pediatric specialties.

Promoting the health and well-being of children and adolescents beyond the hospital walls is a critical part of our mission. We advance child health through innovations in the quality, cost and delivery of care—regardless of payer—and serve as a vital safety net for uninsured, underinsured and publicly insured children. For decades, we have served as the region's center for children's health, providing highly specialized pediatric care across large geographic areas.

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