Nemours Children's Health Convenes Behavioral Health Event with Health, Education, Federal Leaders to Improve Access to Care

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 9, 2023) – Nemours Children's Health today convened the "Well Beyond Medicine: Implementing School-Based Behavioral Health Programs" virtual conference.

The conference connected mental health providers, federal agencies, policy experts, educational leaders and other experts in an effort to increase access to mental health services through school-based health centers. The federal agencies in attendance – the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) and the Department of Education – are working to implement policies and legislation that will help address the youth mental health crisis.

Attendees discussed implementation of the various school-based behavioral health provisions included in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (P.L. 117-159) and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (P.L. 117-328). The goal of the convening was to identify best practices, and gaps and policy recommendations that federal and state lawmakers can consider as part of ongoing discussions about mental health care access in schools.

"Today's behavioral health virtual convening demonstrates that leaders in healthcare, government and education can come together on the issue of child and youth mental health, learn best practices, and develop real-world solutions for school-based care," said Nemours Children's Health President and CEO R. Lawrence Moss, MD. "We must take action to address the youth mental health crisis and Nemours Children's is working to increase access for children across the country. We look forward to working with our community partners and government officials on policies and legislation that will help Nemours and other multi-sector partners create the healthiest generations of children."

Several families impacted by mental health challenges shared their stories and experiences accessing mental health services at the Nemours school-based health centers during the virtual session.

"Our school-based health center has been a tremendous help. We're dealing with grief, and it comes in waves," said Donna Robertson, of Bear, Del. Donna lost her daughter to a drug overdose, and now cares for her grandson, who frequently has memories of his mother's death. "I have health insurance and additional resources, but still couldn't get access to care for months. With school-based mental health services, my grandson can see a therapist immediately, and they're able to address his issues right away."

To hear more about Donna's story, click here.

The behavioral health convening, focused on developing actionable recommendations for the federal agencies implementing these provisions, marks an additional step Nemours is taking to improve access to mental health services for children across the country.

In addition to providing mental health services at school-based health centers, Nemours allows families and patients to access critical behavioral health care via telehealth through the Nemours app.

In the coming months, Nemours will release a summary of key findings from the event, including policy recommendations for CMS, HRSA, SAMHSA and the Department of Education.

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 more than 70 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, 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.

To learn more about Nemours Children's National Office of Policy & Prevention, visit https://www.nemours.org/about/policy.html.

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