

Nemours Children's Health, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, U.S. Sen. Tom Carper Co-hosted Event Recognizing Military-Connected Families

WILMINGTON, Del. (June 28, 2024) — Nemours Children's Health, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, and U.S. Senator Tom Carper, D-Del., today co-hosted an event at Nemours Children's Hospital, Delaware to elevate awareness of the unique needs of millions of military and veteran families. The event also highlighted the special contributions of "hidden helpers," the children and teens living with a wounded, ill, or injured veteran or service member.

The event featured remarks by leaders from Nemours and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Senator Carper, and panel discussions with representatives from the military, education, healthcare, early childhood space, and military and veteran caregivers.

Military caregivers, including Silvia Lopez of Dover, Del., shared how healthcare providers can better understand the realities of hidden helpers.

"It's important to understand that this is a different life from typical households," said Lopez, who along with her five children, cares for her veteran husband who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. "Hidden helpers are strong and knowledgeable, but they also have their challenges. It's important for care providers to validate their feelings and offer support."

The event amplified and announced new commitments to address the needs of military-connected families. For example, Nemours shared that the organization is adding a field to each patient's electronic medical record to help providers identify children in military or veteran families during the registration process to better meet their needs. Also announced, the Children's Hospital Association officially joined the Hidden Helpers Coalition and encouraged its member hospitals to join.

"Nemours Children's is committed to creating the healthiest generations of children. By convening these critical conversations among the healthcare industry, policymakers, and military families, we are improving the lives of children and youth across the country," said R. Lawrence Moss, MD, FACS, FAAP, President and CEO, Nemours Children's Health. "We are honored to partner with Senator Tom Carper and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to make this event a reality. Together, we can substantively support providers in offering better care to the families who are defending our nation's freedom."

In addition, the discussion highlighted a new online training program for healthcare providers, a resource created so physicians and allied health professionals can better care for millions of children and teens living with a wounded, ill, or injured service member or veteran.

The day featured:

- Remarks and insights from military-connected children and spouses
 - A moderated conversation among policymakers to discuss their work to support military and veteran families
 - A panel discussion on the opportunities in the early years and in the education sector to support military and veteran families
 - A panel discussion on how leaders in the healthcare sector are committing to new collaborations in support of military-connected families

"As 23-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, I understand the sacrifices our servicemembers, and their families, make to serve and protect our country," said Senator Carper, the last serving Vietnam Veteran in the Senate. "One of the best ways we can honor their sacrifices is to ensure they have the support they need when they return home. That is why I've worked hard to increase access to VA healthcare, including supporting the passage of the largest expansion of health benefits through the PACT Act, protecting G.I. benefits, and passing legislation that helps provide mental health services to children across the country. By working together like we are today, we can all do our part to support our 'hidden helpers.'"

"We are thankful to work with Senator Tom Carper and Nemours Children's Health to bring attention to hidden helpers and the resources they need," said Steve Schwab, CEO, Elizabeth Dole Foundation. "By working together, we will make an impact for these families and change the outcomes for our nation's youngest military and veteran caregivers."

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation first brought attention to the crisis facing military and veteran caregiving children and teens, whom the Foundation calls America's "[hidden helpers](#)," for their overlooked role in supporting the care of wounded, ill, and injured veterans at home. In 2021, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation released a groundbreaking [study by Mathematica](#) that revealed the high levels of stress, burnout, fatigue, anxiety, and depression experienced by young people in caregiving families. The report revealed troubling data indicating much higher incidences of social isolation and trouble in school, and increased levels of anxiety and depression.

About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two freestanding

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 addressing children's needs well beyond medicine. In producing the highly acclaimed, award-winning pediatric medicine podcast Well Beyond Medicine, Nemours underscores that commitment by featuring the people, programs and partnerships addressing whole child health. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, Nemours' [KidsHealth.org](https://www.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. For more information, visit [Nemours.org](https://www.nemours.org).

About U.S. Sen. Tom Carper

United States Senator Tom Carper has served as Delaware's State Treasurer, Congressman, Governor and now senior Senator. He served five years as a naval flight officer, served three tours of duty in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and continued to serve in the Naval Reserve as a P-3 aircraft mission commander until retiring with the rank of captain in 1991 after 23 years of military service.

Tom Carper is Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, where he leads the fight to protect our environment in the U.S. Senate. He also serves on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Finance Committees. As the last Vietnam Veteran in the Senate, Tom Carper has worked tirelessly over his career to support veteran benefits and strengthen families.

About Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Hidden Heroes

The Elizabeth Dole Foundation is the preeminent organization empowering, supporting, and honoring our nation's 5.5 million military caregivers – the spouses, parents, family members, and friends who care for America's wounded, ill, or injured veterans at home. Founded by Senator Elizabeth Dole in 2012, the Foundation adopts a comprehensive approach in its support and advocacy, working with leaders in the public, private, nonprofit, and faith communities to recognize military caregivers' service and promote their well-being. Learn more about the Elizabeth Dole Foundation at elizabethdolefoundation.org. [To](https://hiddenheroes.org/resources/hiddenhelpers) learn more about hidden helpers please visit hiddenheroes.org/resources/hiddenhelpers.

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Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(1\)](#)

<https://nemours.mediaroom.com/2024-06-28-Nemours-Childrens-Health,-the-Elizabeth-Dole-Foundation,-U-S-Sen-Tom-Carper-Co-hosted-Event-Recognizing-Military-Connected-Families>