

Healthy Children are Vital for Building a Stronger American Workforce

New White Paper Connects Investing in Children's Health to the U.S. Economic Future

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (July 17, 2020) – Improving workforce productivity and future economic growth in the U.S. requires addressing health-related productivity issues in childhood, when interventions are comparatively inexpensive and the benefits can last a lifetime. This is the assertion made in a new white paper, [*Growing the Economy: Children, Health and the American Worker*](#), authored by R. Lawrence Moss, MD, FACS, FAAP, president and CEO of Nemours Children's Health System.

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“In order to compete and lead in the global marketplace, we need to invest in the health and development of America's future workforce— children,” said Moss. “These investments will yield the greatest long-term results for creating a healthier population and more productive workforce.”

The paper points to an alarming downward trend in Americans' health and its impact on labor force participation and employee productivity. Health-related work losses cost U.S. employers an estimated \$225.8 billion each year, with an additional \$36.4 billion lost each year due to absenteeism. One-third of unemployed, prime working age adults cite health limitations as the primary reason, while health indicators of today's youth point to a further exacerbation of these costly workforce issues if not addressed.

Fortunately, the paper suggests, many of these health indicators could be improved through prevention of key chronic conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension and depression in childhood. The paper outlines three practical steps that, if taken now, will improve the health of the future U.S. workforce:

- **Update Systems:** Align financial incentives toward a “pay-for-health” model to incentivize the system, hospitals and providers to focus on maximizing the health of the populations they serve.
- **Update Infrastructure:** Develop and evolve the digital infrastructure to improve efficiency, multi-sector coordination and communication, and the patient experience.
- **Update Policies:** Enact federal and regional policies that encourage positive system changes and eliminate obstacles. Some policies hinder the ability of health care providers to update systems and infrastructure. One example is the existing telemedicine policy, which places restrictions on access to providers based on the physical location of the patient and provider.

“Private and public partnerships have begun to facilitate and encourage collaboration, innovation, and communication that is necessary to improve future workforce productivity, but more investment is needed,” said Moss. “Working together, we can help today's children lead the U.S. into an era of unprecedented economic growth.”

The white paper, *Growing the Economy: Children, Health and the American Worker*, can be accessed at www.nemours.org/about/sdoh.html.

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About Nemours Children's Health System. Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in six states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty, and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours CareConnect.

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

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