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Phoenix Children's Praises Arizona Congressmen for Supporting Graduate Medical Education Program in Children's Hospitals

Bill to continue pediatric training support now moves to House-Senate conference committee

(Phoenix, Ariz.) – Leaders of Phoenix Children's Hospital praised members of the Arizona Congressional delegation today after the House of Representatives voted to continue a vital children's health program that supports the training of pediatricians and pediatric sub-specialists in children's teaching hospitals including Phoenix Children's.

The Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) Program was created by Congress in 1999 to address a disparity in the level of support that pediatric training hospitals were receiving for their graduate medical education programs. On June 21, the House agreed to extend CHGME when it passed H.R. 5574, the Children's Hospitals GME Support Reauthorization Act, by a vote of 421 to 4. H.R. 5574 would reauthorize CHGME for five more years at \$300 million annually.

"At a time when the pediatric population is booming here in Phoenix, we simply can't afford to lose ground in our programs that will train the doctors to care for them. We strongly supported this reauthorization and we are incredibly grateful to members of our delegation for listening," said Bob Meyer, President and CEO of Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Arizona Congressional members who supported H.R. 5574 include U.S. Reps. Rick Renzi (R-1), Trent Franks (R-2), John Shadegg (R-3), Ed Pastor (D-4), J.D. Hayworth (R-5), Raul Grijalva (D-7), and Jim Kolbe (R-8).

Only one percent of all hospitals -- the children's hospitals -- train nearly 30 percent of all pediatricians and half of all pediatric sub-specialists in the country. At a time of nationwide shortages of pediatric sub-specialists, the growth in CHGME hospitals' training programs accounted for more than 80 percent of all new pediatric sub-specialty training programs and more than 65 percent of all new pediatric sub-specialists in training. Had it not

been for the growth in CHGME hospitals' training programs, there would have been a net decline in the number of general pediatricians trained in recent years.

"CHGME has been a great success, and it's meant everything to our medical education program here at Phoenix Children's," said Mel Cohen, MD, Phoenix Children's Director of Medical Education.

In today's increasingly price competitive health care marketplace, fewer and fewer insurers pay the extra costs of teaching hospitals. Medicare is the only remaining major payer of graduate medical education, spending about \$8 billion annually. However, because they care for children, not the elderly, children's hospitals receive virtually no Medicare GME support – only about 1/200th of what other teaching hospitals receive on average.

In 1999, Congress recognized that the unintended exclusion of children's hospitals from Medicare GME support could put the hospitals and the nation's pediatric workforce at a risk. In response, it created CHGME to provide a level of federal GME support comparable to what Medicare provides to all teaching hospitals. Because of CHGME, children's hospitals in recent years have received about 80 percent of the level of federal GME support other teaching hospitals receive through Medicare.

H.R. 5574 now moves to a joint House-Senate conference committee, which will be appointed to resolve differences between H.R. 5574 and S. 285, the Senate version of the same reauthorization. S. 285 authorizes \$330 million for CHGME.

Phoenix Children's Hospital is Arizona's leader in pediatric care and is one of the 10 largest free-standing children's hospitals in the nation. The most comprehensive array of pediatric specialists in the State practice at this one organization. The outstanding clinical expertise, as well as high patient volume, and an unwavering commitment to caring only for children, all contribute to Children's leadership position. For information about Phoenix Children's, visit the Hospital's award-winning website at www.phoenixchildrens.com.