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Phoenix Children’s Hospital Endorses Senate Bill to Address Need for Quality and Performance Measures for Children’s Health Care

PHOENIX, Ariz. (April 27, 2007) – Phoenix Children’s Hospital endorsed a bill to provide federal authority and \$100 million over five years to invest in the development and testing of quality measures for children’s health care. Senators Evan Bayh (D-IN), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Blanche Lincoln (D-AR), along with Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Norm Coleman (R-MN) and Ken Salazar (D-CO) introduced the *Children’s Health Care Quality Act* (S.1226) before the Senate Thursday. The bill is supported by the National Association of Children’s Hospitals (N.A.C.H.).

In addition to providing support for private sector’s development of pediatric quality measure development, the bill would make it possible for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to fund demonstrations of evidence-based approaches to improve hospital care for children. The bill also would fund demonstrations of model programs in pediatric health information technology and disease management.

“The Children’s Health Care Quality Act is a first step in eliminating the disparity between adults and children when it comes to measuring and reporting on health care quality,” added Larry Smith, chief financial officer at Phoenix Children’s Hospital. “If CMS had the resources to promote the development of pediatric quality measures, consumers, payers and the pediatric community would have a body of nationally consistent, evidence-based measures for hospital care for children.”

The quality of adult health care has benefited from federal leadership and investment in the development and use of measures for adult health care, particularly through Medicare. However, CMS lacks the explicit authority and resources to provide the level of support required for the development of pediatric measures for children in both Medicaid and the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Individual state Medicaid and SCHIP programs also lack the resources and population sufficient to develop their own measures.

Last year, N.A.C.H. commissioned a 50-state survey by Health Management Associates. It found that while states use quality measures for children’s health services, they are almost always measures of primary and preventive care for children enrolled in managed care plans, not inpatient hospital care for children. Only two states indicated use of any pediatric inpatient measures. Because of limited resources, states are looking to the federal government for leadership and measures.

“In the national movement to develop quality measures for health care, we cannot afford to leave children behind,” emphasized Smith.

Together, Medicaid and SCHIP pay for the health care of more than a quarter of all children. The market share of these programs uniquely positions them to provide significant leadership to advance quality measurement for pediatric care — if CMS has the resources and funding to do so. The *Children’s Health Care Quality Act* would give CMS the ability to foster collaboration among its officials, providers, consumers and leading quality organizations to improve the level of service provided to children throughout the U.S.

In addition to N.A.C.H., the *Children’s Health Care Quality Act* also has the endorsements of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the March of Dimes, the American Hospital Association and others.

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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 website at www.phoenixchildrens.com.