**Speak Now for Kids Family Advocacy Day
LOCAL News Release Template**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 8, 2022**

**Contacts:**

NAME OF MEDIA RELATIONS CONTACT

EMAIL/PHONE #

**NAME Family from CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL**
**Asks Congress to Prioritize Children’s Health**

**WASHINGTON, D.C**. – The NAME family from CITY, STATE whose child receives care from CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL in CITY, STATE will meet virtually with their members of Congress about the importance of prioritizing children’s health as part of the annual Children’s Hospital Association’s Speak Now for Kids Family Advocacy Day, June 12-14. More than 40 patient families from children’s hospitals across the country will raise important issues that affect their children’s care. The NAME family has faced many changes in their lives and feel it’s critical to increase awareness about the ongoing and essential care provided by children’s hospitals like NAME OF CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL.

(INSERT PATIENT/FAMILY STORY HERE – CONNECT STORY TO POLICY ISSUES LIKE MENTAL HEALTH, MEDICAID, CHGME AND OR HOW THE FAMILY HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

EXAMPLE OF POSSIBLE QUOTE BY CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL CEO: “CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL is honored to work with PATIENT/FAMILY NAME and families from across the nation to elevate patient stories and educate lawmakers about the essential role of children’s hospitals and the Medicaid program during these challenging times. Together, we can make children’s health a national priority through policies that help kids lead healthy and productive lives.”

Speak Now for Kids Family Advocacy Day gives children’s hospitals and patient families the opportunity to discuss challenges that must be addressed, such as the need to keep Medicaid strong for kids, solving the mental, emotional and behavioral health crisis in children and increasing funding to train physicians in pediatrics.

Nationwide, approximately 35 million children rely on Medicaid for health care coverage. Roughly 2 million children with complex medical conditions also rely on Medicaid for access to specialized pediatric care. Yet in tough budget times, Medicaid is frequently a target for state-level and federal cuts that will make it harder for Medicaid providers like children’s hospitals to deliver care including critical behavioral health services. On average, children’s hospitals devote half of patient care to children reliant on Medicaid. Annually in STATE, NAME OF CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL provides care to roughly NUMBER of children with Medicaid coverage.

Long before the emergence of COVID-19, many children were experiencing a mental health crisis. Compared to 2016, in 2021 children’s hospitals saw a 153% increase in emergency department visits for suicide attempts and self-injury among kids ages 5-18. Annually in STATE, NAME OF CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL provides care to roughly NUMBER who need hospitalization due to mental health illness. Children’s hospitals are asking Congress to steer funding to providers of mental health services so they can expand capacity and treat more kids in crisis. This can be accomplished by improving access to mental health services through Medicaid, by directing funding for behavioral health programs to specifically target kids’ needs, and by expanding the pediatric workforce and infrastructure to ensure children get the right care, in the right place and at the right time.

Patient families also count on timely access to doctors trained to care for them and their unique needs. Funding for the training program for pediatric residents, the Children’s Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program, lags far behind the funding of training programs for physicians caring primarily for adults. Children’s hospitals in the CHGME program receive just half of what hospitals caring for adults receive for similar training programs – threatening the supply of doctors caring for our nation’s children. Children’s hospitals are asking Congress to increase funding for CHGME.

Learn more about [Speak Now for Kids Family Advocacy Day](https://www.speaknowforkids.org/speak_now_for_kids_family_advocacy_day); read stories about the [patient champions](https://www.speaknowforkids.org/blog) and cheer on the families on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/speaknowforkids/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/speaknowforkids) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/speaknowforkids/?hl=en).

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**Hospital boilerplate**

**Sample Social Media for News Release**

We’re so proud of patient [child’s name] for meeting [virtually] with federal lawmakers to share [his/her/their] story and show these legislators the amazing things that can happen when they prioritize children’s health. #VirtuallyUnstoppable #FAD2022 [link] [photo]

[name] is joining 40 other patients from around the U.S. to meet [virtually] with federal lawmakers during #FAD2022 to share how [hospital] helped them with their critical health care needs. There’s never been a more urgent time to prioritize children’s health. [link] [photo]

We’re proud of all the brave young #VirtuallyUnstoppable patients representing other children with similar health care needs during @SpeakNowforKids Family Advocacy Day! Washington must make the health of our children a top priority. [link]