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March 4, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of children's hospitals and the children and families we serve, we write today to ask your help in safeguarding the most critically ill Ukrainian infants and children in need of transfers to children's hospitals capable of caring for them. Children's Hospital Association (CHA) represents more than 200 children's hospitals across America, and we closely coordinate with our global children's hospitals partners to pursue the health and safety of all children. Children's hospitals are committed to caring for the most critically and medically complex children, even in the face of crisis and conflict.

The Russian attack on Ukraine is presenting an enormous challenge on the specialized and intensive pediatric hospital care in the country. There are very few children's hospitals in Ukraine and those hospitals exist in the few large cities, particularly in Kyiv, where the damage is mounting. The Ukraine children's hospitals care for the most critically ill children. These children are dependent on high levels of specialized pediatric technology, such as ventilation and IV feeding, requiring trained pediatric staff. They cannot be safely transferred or maintained in community health care settings in the region, requiring access to the specialized care only available at children's hospitals in other countries. This requires coordination of capacity and transport to avoid the potential loss of life.

We are in close contact with those children's hospitals in the European Union (EU) and Israel organized under the European Children's Hospital Organization (ECHO). Together with ECHO and children's hospitals in Canada and Australia, we share the priority for these children with highly acute care needs to be safely transferred to children's hospitals across the EU and Middle Eastern region. While we do not expect a need to airlift children in need to North America, this is a contingency our children's hospitals across the United States stand ready to support should local EU capacity be exceeded.

As your administration and the Congress continue to advance support for Ukraine, we ask you to specifically designate financial, coordinative and advocacy support for ***the most critically ill children requiring the intensive and specialized care capability of a children's hospital.*** We know a great deal of assistance is being mobilized to the region from around the world. Amidst all of this necessary support, we are concerned this small but precious sector of the most critically ill children are at a uniquely high risk of having their medical needs underestimated if not relocated to children's hospitals with specialized care capability.

We also ask you to advocate with the leadership of our allies in the EU, and with the United Nations and the World Health Organization, to encourage their greater attention and support for these precious children.

*Champions for Children's Health*

Thank you for your consideration amidst this growing crisis, and please know we stand ready, on behalf of the children's hospitals of the United States, to help, advise, coordinate and otherwise play our role in this important mission for the most critically ill children in Ukraine.

Very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Wietecha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" and last name "Wietecha" clearly distinguishable.

Mark Wietecha  
Chief Executive Officer  
Children's Hospital Association