CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

November 20, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

The Children's Hospital Association is the nation's leading advocate for children's health, uniting children's hospitals to improve care and amplify impact. On behalf of the more than 200 children's hospitals and the millions of children and families we serve, thank you for your continued investment in the needs of pediatrics patients and providers nationwide. **As you finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations legislation, we ask you to prioritize children's health by providing robust funding to support and strengthen pediatric care.**

In order to secure America's future, children's health must be a national priority. We are grateful for the steady investment and funding increases that were included in the FY 2026 appropriations bills crafted in both chambers. Where funding levels differ, we urge you to provide the highest funding possible for these vital children's health programs.

CHA's top priorities for FY 2026 funding include:

- **At least $395 million for the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Program (CHGME).**
- **$10 million for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program (PSLRP) and supporting report language.**
- **$47.2 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).**
- **Report language on reimbursement for essential components of medical research and indirect cost rates.**
- **$23.33 million for the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program.**
- **$7 million for the Pediatric Disaster Care Program (PDCP).**
- **$31 million for Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA).**

Pediatric Health Care Workforce
We appreciate the bipartisan support the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program has received in both the House and Senate appropriations bills. As you work on a final funding package, we urge you to include **at least the $395 million for CHGME** that was included in the House bill, a $5 million increase for the program. CHGME supports the training of more than half of our nation's pediatricians and pediatric specialists. We look forward to working with appropriators on a consistent pathway to more equitable funding for the program to ensure we have the pediatric workforce needed to continue to take care of America's children.

CHA supports the **$10 million for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program (PSLRP)** included in both the House and Senate bills. PSLRP aims to address serious, persistent shortages within the pediatric subspecialty workforce, which impede timely access to care for children. We also support

both bills' report language, which is vital to ensuring this important program works as intended to support the pediatric subspecialty workforce.

Pediatric Medical Research
We were pleased to see a bipartisan commitment to robust and reliable funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) prioritized by both House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

We strongly support the FY 26 funding level of **$47.2 billion for NIH**, approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee. Children's hospitals are leaders in groundbreaking pediatric medical research, developing life-saving treatments and new therapies for a wide range of medical conditions, including childhood cancers, rare diseases, and congenital heart defects. Through direct investment by children's hospitals and federal funding from the NIH, pediatric physician scientists are leading the way to better health care for all children.

Furthermore, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) is the only institute dedicated specifically to understanding children's development and improving the health of children, beginning with prenatal care. Therefore, we support the funding level of **$1.76 billion for NICHD** approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

In addition to funding the NIH at a level that enables America to continue to be the global leader in biomedical research, we strongly encourage Congress to include report language which rejects unilateral cuts to indirect costs. The Administration's plan to cut indirect cost rates to 15% would cause serious harm to the biomedical research enterprise across the country by leaving essential components of medical research underfunded, stifling discoveries to improve children's health. Instead, CHA supports the **FAIR Model**, alluded to in report language by both House and Senate appropriators, which better captures the true costs of biomedical research and has broad support across the medical research community. We are eager to work with you to ensure that research grant funding mechanisms, at NIH and beyond, are effective, transparent, and support pediatric research.

Disaster and Emergency Preparedness for Children
CHA is pleased to see that both the House and Senate provided full funding of **$23.33 million for the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program** and **$7 million for the Pediatric Disaster Care Program (PDCP).**

The EMSC program is the only federal program dedicated to improving emergency care for children throughout communities across the country. EMSC helps ensure that hospitals and ambulances are properly equipped for pediatric emergencies, provides training to first responders and strengthens systems to improve pediatric emergency medical care. Additionally, PDCP is designed to ensure regional capabilities and capacity to meet children's unique health care needs during a disaster or public health event. The PDCP funds three Pediatric Disaster Care Centers of Excellence, based at children's hospitals, that are developing coordinated pediatric care plans in their regions, preparing the medical workforce, and improving statewide medical surge capacity for pediatric care.

Children's Mental Health
The state of mental health among children and adolescents remains a national emergency that requires a stronger response. We appreciate the steps Congress has taken to address this crisis, but CHA encourages greater investment in children's mental health programs that support the education of pediatric mental and behavioral health professionals and improve access to care for children across health care, school, and community settings.

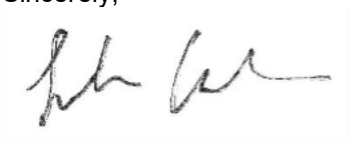
In particular, the Pediatric Mental Health Care Access (PMHCA) program requires additional investment beyond the flat funding level of $13 million included by both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Specifically, CHA is asking for **at least $31 million to properly fund PMHCA.** As you know, the PMHCA program supports the development and expansion of pediatric mental health telehealth consultation programs in 45 states and Washington, D.C., as well as several tribal organizations and territories. This evidence-based program provides mental health consultation to

primary care pediatricians, which improves identification of mental and behavioral health needs in children and streamlines their connections to care.

The reauthorization of the PMHCA within the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act included an expansion of the program to reach more communities and settings, with a plan to increase funding to support that expansion starting in FY26. This is why increased investment for PMHCA by appropriators is vital, or many access lines will be at risk of closing, further restricting children's ability to have their mental health needs managed through primary care.

CHA is committed to working with you to improve the health of our nation's children. Thank you for considering these priority funding requests to support children's health and pediatric care in FY26. A full list of our requests is available here. If we can be of any additional assistance, please contact Cynthia Whitney at **Cynthia.Whitney@childrenshospitals.org**.

Sincerely,



Leah Evangelista
Chief Public Affairs and Brand Officer
Children's Hospital Association