



CHILDREN'S HOSPICE INTERNATIONAL

901 N. Pitt Street, Suite 230 ↑ Alexandria, VA 22314 ↑ 703.684.0330 ↑ 703.684.0226 (fax)
info@chionline.org (email) ↑ www.chionline.org (website)

For Immediate Release
Friday, December 22, 2005

Contact: Kirsten Fedewa
Tel: 703.684.3339

BIPARTISAN LEADERS OF THE COLORADO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION LAUD CHI PACC AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF MEDICAID REFORM

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Bipartisan members of the Colorado Congressional delegation today urged that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "promptly review" a new Medicaid waiver that will soon be submitted and is expected to provide greatly improved health care for 4,000 children in Colorado.

The state of Colorado will soon unveil its formal waiver submission to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), which is the first step toward actual implementation of the landmark CHI Program for All-Inclusive Care for Children and Their Families, known as CHI PACC.

CHI PACC was developed by Children's Hospice International (CHI) with technical assistance from CMS. Colorado is the 2nd state to apply for a CMS waiver, after Florida. (Florida's CHI PACC waiver was approved by HHS/CMS in June 2005.)

The December 20, 2005 letter – which was cosigned by all 9 members of the delegation – including U.S. Senators Wayne Allard (R-Colo.), Ken Salazar (D-Colo.), and U.S. Rep. Joel Hefley (R-Colo.) – lauded the merits of "The Butterfly Program," the Colorado CHI PACC that has been under development at the Children's Hospital in Denver for three years.

"CHI PACC ensures that Colorado families no longer have to CHOOSE between the hospice and palliative care services that they so desperately need and the possibility of a cure," said Congressman Joel Hefley (R-Colo.) in the joint letter. "They will be able to pursue both simultaneously."

CHI PACC provides better quality care for children with life-threatening conditions and their families, while at the same time reducing costs, resulting in savings for the states and federal governments through Medicaid.

Hefley added: "Initial demonstrations have shown significant potential cost savings in four states – Colorado, Florida, New York and Utah. The CHI PACC program signifies a true federal-state partnership. It has received extensive bipartisan, bicameral support since its inception."

Earlier this month, members of the Congressional delegation attended events in Washington, D.C. and Denver sponsored by CHI to announce the selection of Dr. Brian Greffe, a pediatric oncologist, to head the national CHI PACC program. Greffe also heads The Butterfly Program in Denver.

"CHI PACC represents a win-win-win for the federal and state governments – and for families," said Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO) at the December 8 event in Washington, D.C. "The children and families of Colorado, and our neighboring states, need this as soon as possible. I am thrilled that our state is a leader in making it happen," he said.

Colorado's First Lady Frances Owens agreed. She also praised Colorado's leadership with the innovative national CHI PACC effort: "Colorado's leadership on this important program is significant and is a model for the nation," she said at a December 12 briefing of the program in Denver.

“We are all proud that Colorado is the first state on many fronts,” said Senator Wayne Allard. “This is the first program of its kind in the West; and the first that will serve children from an entire region, including patients not only from Colorado, but also from Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Dakota and Wyoming.”

“By providing key support services to children and their families as they cope with life-threatening conditions, we are all working to ensure that the immediate needs of our most fragile citizens are met,” said Senator Ken Salazar. “This is a significant contribution toward the quality of life of Colorado’s most courageous children and families.” The delegation letter also noted that “the program can be adapted to help U.S. military families.”

“We are deeply grateful for the support of the Colorado’s elected officials in this worthy endeavor – and I look forward to our continued working relationship as we keep this program moving forward,” said CHI Founding Director and CEO Ann Armstrong-Dailey.

For more information about the Colorado or national CHI PACC initiatives, or about Children’s Hospice International, please call 703.684.0330 or go to www.chionline.org.

#

#

#