



July 16, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman  
Chairman  
The Honorable Joe Barton  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman and Ranking Member Barton:

On behalf of Nemours, I write to commend the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, and Education and Labor on the inclusion of Division C, Title III – Prevention and Wellness – in the America’s Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009. We appreciate your leadership in prioritizing prevention as a key component of health reform.

Nemours is a premier integrated child health system directly serving 250,000 children mainly in Delaware and North Central Florida. Nemours has taken on the challenge of putting a prevention-oriented child health system into practice by integrating medical care with community-based prevention to improve the health of children in Delaware. Through its Health and Prevention Services Division (NHPS), Nemours acts as a catalyst to change social determinants of health within and beyond the medical care system. The Nemours system, which previously cared for approximately 25% of the state's children, now works to improve the health of all 228,000 children in Delaware and is working to do the same in North Central Florida.

At Nemours, we understand a focus on prevention initiatives for the population is critical to achieving the reform our health system needs to improve health outcomes and drive down costs over the long term. We would especially like to express support for the following sections of the bill in Division C, Title III:

- **Subtitle A – Section 3111: *Prevention and Wellness Trust*** – We applaud the application of a population-level focus and a dedicated source of funding as it reflects an expansion of the traditional medical model to a multidimensional view of health. At Nemours we recognize the greatest opportunity for significant system improvement is through changes in policy and practice to focus on primary prevention. Nemours dedicates significant resources to population health and has seen first hand the benefits of this approach. We especially support the investment in community preventive and wellness services (Subtitle E), In Delaware, this approach has allowed us to reach many more children with sustainable impact and cost-effective use of resources.
- **Subtitle B – Section 3121: *National Prevention and Wellness Strategy*** – We support the development of a national strategy aimed at improving the nation’s health through both clinical and community prevention and wellness activities.

We applaud the requirement for consultation by a wide range of federal agencies. We anticipate issues most salient to children’s healthy development, particularly healthy eating and physical activity, will be key aims of this national strategy. Similarly, we expect reversing the obesity trend will be considered a priority when the National Strategy is developed. At Nemours we recognize that safeguarding children’s health is a preventive measure. Securing the health of America’s children is the surest way to guarantee improved health for our nation as our whole.

- **Subtitle C – Section 3132: *Task Force on Community Preventive Services*** – We appreciate your commitment to building the evidence base for prevention. At Nemours we are committed to continuously developing evidence about our prevention efforts. In addition to evaluating our program strategies, Nemours invests in research to analyze the cost-benefit impact of child health on adult health and economic potential, as well as research in the area of developing and implementing new methods for using evidence to guide policy related to child health promotion within the healthcare sector.

We encourage you to broaden the scope of the community prevention stakeholders board to include representatives from health care provider systems. There is growing evidence that community prevention efforts are more successful when they are integrated with medical care, as they are at Nemours. We have championed cross-sector collaboration for effective health promotion and disease prevention and we believe the most efficient community preventive services occur when all sectors of communities collaborate. Including health care provider systems on the stakeholders board will encourage their participation in community prevention and wellness.

- **Subtitle E – Section 3151: *Community-Based Prevention and Wellness Services Grants*** – We applaud expanding resources to community preventive services. At Nemours we are committed to the integration of clinical services with community-wide prevention efforts. In Delaware, Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS) has developed and implemented a prevention-oriented child health system model. The NHPS approach has been effective at bringing health to all the places children live, learn and play (including child care, schools, community-based organizations and pediatric practices). As a result, Nemours reaches more than 50 percent of the children in Delaware in 2009.

We encourage you to specify that the Secretary of Health and Human Services should give preference to health care provider systems or other entities that include health care provider systems as partners because of the key roles they play in communities. We currently have market failure when it comes to disease prevention incentives in our health care system, therefore explicitly providing for community-base prevention is critical. Giving preference to health care provider systems seeking funding to implement community prevention and wellness is a critical step that must be taken to change the incentives in the marketplace.

Finally, we urge you to include nutrition labeling of standard menu items at chain restaurants. At Nemours we take a comprehensive approach to combat childhood obesity,

Alfred I. duPont  
Hospital for Children  
Wilmington, Delaware

Nemours Cardiac Center  
Wilmington, Delaware

Nemours Center for  
Children’s Health Media

Nemours Children’s Clinic  
Jacksonville, Florida  
Orlando, Florida  
Pensacola, Florida  
Wilmington, Delaware

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Prevention Services

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Wilmington, Delaware

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one that reaches children in all the different places they spend their time. Therefore, we recognize the significant role that basic nutritional information plays in helping parents make healthier choices for themselves and their children and we have worked in Delaware to promote menu labeling.

As you consider various incentives to spur greater investment in health promotion and disease prevention, Nemours, as an early adopter, stands ready to work with you to ensure a public-private partnership in this effort to improve the health of the public. Nemours has shown leadership in this area by allocating \$17 million toward a population-based health and prevention program in 2008 in addition to the usual elements of individual prevention incorporated in our pediatric health care system. The government cannot do this alone, and we are ready to work with you to encourage investment of both public and private resources for the long-term benefit of our nation.

The prevention and wellness provisions of America's Affordable Health Choices Act of 2009 demonstrate your commitment to transform our nation's health system in a way that will benefit generations of Americans. Nemours looks forward to sharing our model of health promotion and disease prevention for children with you and the Committee. We applaud your commitment to improving the health of our nation and we stand ready to work with you to focus on prevention.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 302-444-9127.

Sincerely,

Alfred I. duPont  
Hospital for Children  
Wilmington, Delaware

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Children's Health Media

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Pensacola, Florida  
Wilmington, Delaware

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Wilmington, Delaware

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**Debbie I. Chang**  
Vice President for Policy and Prevention, Nemours