

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Finance
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
United States House Committee on
Energy & Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
United State House Committee on
Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2018

Dear Chairmen Hatch and Walden and Ranking Members Wyden and Pallone:

On behalf of Nemours Children's Health System (Nemours), I am writing to thank you for your commitment to addressing the opioid epidemic and particularly for your work on the conferenced opioid bill (H.R.6). We especially appreciate your inclusion of Sec. 1005, which addresses Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidance related to Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), as well as Sec. 1009, which addresses the provision of telehealth for substance use disorder, including in school based health centers. We appreciate the dedication of your staff in prioritizing the needs of the pediatric population.

As you know, there is not currently consistency in terminology, delivery models and coding regarding NAS. Additionally, especially given the cost to Medicaid, there is great opportunity for states to learn from one another regarding payment models to test. The additional guidance and technical assistance included in Section 1005 of H.R. 6 will provide further clarity and assist in the dissemination of emerging best practices.

Additionally, emerging evidence suggests that providing mental health services in schools is an effective way to identify and reach children with mental health needs, and that telehealth can be an effective tool in expanding access to mental health services.¹ Given that nearly half of Medicaid beneficiaries are children, the provisions in Section 1009 of H.R. 6 will expand access to substance use disorder treatment to children and adolescents in Medicaid, including while in school.

Thank you for your support and advocacy for provisions related to NAS and pediatric telehealth. Nemours looks forward to continuing to work with you on legislative initiatives that support the health and development of children and families.

Sincerely,



Daniella Gratale, MA
Director, Office of Child Health Policy & Advocacy
Nemours Children's Health System

¹ Grady, B. J., Lever, N., Cunningham, D., & Stephan, S. (2011). Telepsychiatry and school mental health. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics*, 20(1), 81-94. Retrieved from [https://www.childpsych.theclinics.com/article/S1056-4993\(10\)00080-5/fulltext](https://www.childpsych.theclinics.com/article/S1056-4993(10)00080-5/fulltext)