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June 28, 2018

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Michael Bennet
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Barton
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kathy Castor
2052 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sens. Grassley and Bennet and Reps. Barton and Castor:

On behalf of more than 9,000 pediatric nurse practitioners and fellow pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses committed to providing optimal health care to children, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) appreciates your leadership in introducing the “Advancing Care for Exceptional Kids Act of 2017 (ACE Kids Act)” (S. 428/H.R. 3325). Your legislation would provide critically needed help to improve care for children with complex medical conditions on Medicaid. NAPNAP and its members strongly support your efforts.

As you know, advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who concentrate on children’s care, including pediatric nurse practitioners (PNPs), are critically aware of the importance of stable, affordable health coverage in ensuring that families and their children receive the timely health care they need. Practicing in primary care, specialty, and acute care settings, APRNs dedicated to pediatric care have provided quality health care to children and families for more than 40 years in an extensive range of practice settings such as pediatric offices, schools, and children’s hospitals – reaching millions of patients across the country every year. Our members diagnose, treat and refer for care the growing number of children facing the challenge of complex medical conditions.

Pediatric-focused APRNs know that children with complex medical conditions have chronic life-limiting illnesses and disabilities, often see six or more specialists and a dozen or more pediatric providers, and require care that takes them across state lines. Parents of children with multiple, life-threatening disabilities struggle to coordinate their youngsters’ complex care under the current Medicaid system, which often requires care furnished by providers in several different states. Only federal legislation can fix the fragmented system for children with complex medical conditions that require regional care.

Thanks to your efforts, the ACE Kids Act would create a patient-centered, pediatric-focused delivery system for this unique population of children to ensure ready access to care across state lines and reduce the burden on these children’s families. Specially-designed health homes created for children with complex medical conditions under the ACE Kids Act would employ national quality standards and coordinate care, both essential to improving quality of care and lowering costs. These health homes would include the full range of acute, post-acute and primary care providers, as well as behavioral health professionals. These health homes would focus on outpatient care to ensure children get the care that they need in the most appropriate settings closest to home, while reducing unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency room visits.

The ACE Kids Act, which is voluntary for states, families and providers, can deliver savings to Medicaid through increased efficiencies, including reducing hospitalizations and emergency room visits, while providing the array of outpatient and community services and support needed by these children. NAPNAP and its members are happy to support this important legislation.

Providing children with complex medical conditions enrolled in Medicaid the best possible care is a national challenge, and enactment of the ACE Kids Act will bring us closer to ensuring these vulnerable children receive the care they need. We are grateful to you for championing the ACE Kids Act, and we are eager to work with you to ensure that this critical legislation is enacted into law this year. Please feel free to contact NAPNAP for assistance on these or any issues or policies related to children's health care. We have a wide breath of experts ready and eager to assist you in framing a healthier future for our children.

Sincerely,



Tresa E. Zielinski, DNP, RN, APN-NP, CPNP-PC
President