

February 23, 2009

The Honorable Jim Matheson
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Matheson:

As organizations that care deeply about the health and safety of children, we offer our support for H.R. 479, the Wakefield Act, a bill to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program.

In 2009, the EMSC program marks its 25th anniversary of driving fundamental changes in the nation's emergency medical system to improve emergency care for children. As the only federal program dedicated to improving emergency care for children, the EMSC program has brought vital attention and resources to an otherwise neglected population. It is no coincidence that since the EMSC program was established, death rates due to pediatric injury have dropped by an astounding 40 percent.

The modest federal investment in the EMSC program produces a wide array of benefits to children's health. EMSC Partnership Grants go to every state EMS Office to help underwrite efforts on pediatric emergency care. EMSC Targeted Issues Grants help address the gaps in children's emergency care where promising research opportunities exist. The Pediatric Emergency Care Applied Research Network is the first federally-funded national pediatric emergency medicine research network, conducting high-priority, multi-institutional research into the prevention and management of acute illnesses and injuries in children and youth of all ages. The National EMSC Data Analysis Resource Center assists state agencies and other entities in analyzing data to target prevention and services most effectively.

H.R. 479, the Wakefield Act, would authorize the EMSC program to continue its vital work for an additional five years. The bill is named for the family of Sen. Kent Conrad's former chief of staff, Mary Wakefield, who is well known as a friend of the pediatric community. Tragically, Mary lost her brother and two of his children to a dreadful car crash. Her nephew narrowly survived, due in part to the excellent emergency care he received. All U.S. children deserve access to the same excellent care when they are ill or injured.

We appreciate deeply your long-standing commitment to the health of our nation's children and the quality of the emergency care they receive. We look forward to working with you on the timely consideration and passage into law of the Wakefield Act.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Advocates for EMS
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Ambulance Association
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians
American College of Surgeons
American Medical Response
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
A O North America
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Child Neurology Society
Children's Defense Fund
The Children's Health Fund
Coalition for American Trauma Care
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Emergency Nurses Association
EMS Magazine
EMS Responder.com
Family Violence Prevention Fund
First Candle/SIDS Alliance
International Association of EMS Chiefs
March of Dimes
National Association of Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Children's Hospitals
National Association of EMS Physicians
National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
National Association of State EMS Officials
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Orthopedic Trauma Association
Ouray County EMS
Safe Kids USA
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of Trauma Nurses
Trust for America's Health