

October 6, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lori Trahan  
2439 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Grassley and Representative Trahan:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children, a bipartisan children's advocacy organization dedicated to making children and families a priority in federal budget and policy decisions, to express our support for the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act (H.R. 4758/S. 2372).

Children's health needs are unique. In the earliest years of their lives, they are rapidly developing. That development sets the foundation for the rest of their lives. If they are not consistently getting periodic, age-appropriate health care, that foundation is weakened, potentially leading to costlier physical and behavioral health issues down the line. This care ensures any social, emotional, or developmental delays are detected early before beginning school.

For children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN), speciality care is necessary for their health, mental well-being, and development. Nearly half of these children are covered by Medicaid and CHIP.<sup>1</sup> However, access to this care is described as "fragmented, unaffordable, stressful, and untimely" and overall inaccessible by families and providers of CYSHCN.<sup>2</sup> 7.8% of these families report forgoing healthcare due to obstacles.<sup>3</sup> These numbers are higher for families of color, adding to already present health inequities.

For many children, especially those with medically complex conditions, specialty care may not be available in their state. Under current law, children on Medicaid and CHIP must navigate a

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<sup>1</sup> Hasan, Anoosha and Creveling, Emily. "Medicaid's Transportation Benefit and Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)." The Catalyst Center, Boston University. October 2022.

<https://ciswh.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/NEMT-Brief-Oct-2022.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Kuo, Dennis Z. et al. Access to Services for Children and Youth With Special Health Care Needs and Their Families: Concepts and Considerations for an Integrated Systems Redesign." Pediatrics, Vol 149(7). June 1, 2022.

<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/149/Supplement%207/e2021056150H/188217/Access-to-Services-for-Children-and-Youth-With?autologincheck=redirected>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

burdensome process that requires the facility to be pre-approved in order to access out-of-state care. This additional layer of bureaucracy adds barriers that could delay time-sensitive care that could greatly impact a child's quality of life. Research shows that families of CYSHCN are more likely to delay care due to transportation-related barriers than those without special care needs.<sup>4</sup>

We commend your efforts to mitigate these gaps in health care with the introduction of the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act. By streamlining the approvals process for eligible out-of-state providers and forgoing the burdensome screening process, children can much more readily access specialists in a timely manner. This legislation means that children with special health needs are able to receive potentially life-saving treatment regardless of their home state or where they receive care.

Thank you for making health care more accessible for children with special health needs. We look forward to working with you to pass the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "L" and "y".

Bruce Lesley  
President

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<sup>4</sup> Hasan, Anoosha and Creveling, Emily. "Medicaid's Transportation Benefit and Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)."