



Your Connection

Patient Care

Nurses Station

Managers

Departments

Government Affairs**Surveys**

Government Affairs Update

Government And Community Affairs News

Medicaid

PeachCare for Kids

Issues

Resources

Government Affairs Contact List

Photo Gallery

For Department Only

Recycle Bin[All Site Content](#)[Careforce > Departments > Government Affairs](#)**Government and Community Affairs News:****Governor Signs Concussion Bill at Scottish Rite**

Tuesday, April 23, Gov. Nathan Deal signed into law House Bill 284, the "Return to Play Act of 2013" at Scottish Rite. HB 284, sponsored by Rep. Jimmy Pruitt (R-Eastman), is aimed at developing return-to-play policies for youth athletes who are concussed during a game, educating parents on the risks of concussions and preventing Second Impact Syndrome (SIS).

Each year in Georgia, thousands of children suffer concussions -- serious pediatric injuries. The Children's Concussion Program, led by neurosurgeon Andrew Reisner, M.D., saw more than 1,400 concussion patients in 2012 alone. As Georgia's leading resource for sports-related youth concussion diagnosis, care and education, Children's actively lobbied and participated in support of the concussion bill. The new legislation will play a critical role in preventing Second Impact Syndrome and protecting youth athletes throughout Georgia from the dangers associated with multiple head injuries.

**Chief Medical Officer Testifies Before Congress**

As the nation works towards implementing the Affordable Care Act, Children's is working to combat concerns of the future pediatric physician workforce. In March, Dan Salinas, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, testified before the House Labor-HHS Subcommittee of Appropriations, explaining the importance of funding the Children's Hospital Graduate Education (CHGME) program. The subcommittee, chaired by Georgia Congressman, Representative Jack Kingston (R - Savannah), selected Dr. Salinas from more than 150 applicants to testify.



CHGME supplies children's hospitals across the U.S. with federal funding to support their pediatric residency training programs. Congress authorized this funding stream in 1999 because the federal government was already funding residency training programs at adult hospitals through the Medicare program. Prior to the authorization of CHGME, children's hospitals were paying to train the next generation of pediatric physicians out of their own pockets. Each year, Children's trains approximately 150 pediatric residents and fellows. Unfortunately, funding for this program has been significantly reduced in recent years, from \$317.5 million in 2010 to \$265.2 million in 2012—a reduction of more than 15 percent.

CHGME funding has had a tremendous impact, enabling the 55 children's hospitals receiving funding to increase their overall training by more than 45 percent since the program was established. The CHGME program also has accounted for more than 74 percent of the growth in the number of new pediatric subspecialists training nationwide. The hospitals that receive CHGME train more than 6,000 residents annually—equating to 49 percent of all pediatric residents in the country (including 45 percent of general pediatricians and 51 percent of pediatric specialists).

Children's has been among the most vocal advocates in Washington D.C. for CHGME funding. U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA) is the lead Republican sponsor of the bill to authorize Congress to fund the CHGME program. Children's has worked very closely with his office to continue advocating for this critically important program.

"It is critical that a leading, high volume, pediatric healthcare organization like Children's be a leader in shaping policy nationally which will impact children not only in Georgia, but all over the nation," says Ron Frieson, Chief Public Policy Officer.

Children's will continue working with Senator Isakson, members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation, and other children's hospitals to advocate for CHGME funding.

State Leaders Raise \$28,000 to Benefit Children's

In February earlier this month, State Senator Ross Tolleson (R, Perry) and House Majority Leader Larry O'Neal (R, Bonair) generously hosted a *Kiss Childhood Cancer Goodbye* fundraiser benefiting the Aflac Cancer Center. Senator Tolleson, whose family had been personally affected by cancer, worked with Government Affairs and the Foundation on the fundraiser.



Event festivities included live music from local music sensation Caylee Anna Hammack and a silent auction. The event raised more than \$28,000 from a wide variety of sources, including other elected officials.

Prior to the fundraiser, State Senator Tolleson and Caylee Anna toured the Aflac Cancer Center. Both spent time with children decorating bandanas and passing out Atlanta Falcons hats to patients. Senator Tolleson and Caylee Anna also met with representatives from the Children's Sibley Heart Center. They made an appearance at the Voice where Caylee Anna performed a few songs.

Children's is very grateful to Senator Tolleson, Majority Leader O'Neal and all of the generous individuals involved in making the *Kiss Childhood Cancer Goodbye* event such an overwhelming success.

U.S. Representative Hank Johnson Visits Egleston

Congressman Hank Johnson (D-Stone Mountain) recently toured Egleston. MaryBeth Bova, SVP – Operations, Egleston, and Ron Frieson, Chief Public Policy Officer, guided him through the hospital. They stopped by the CICU and Dr. Kevin Maher discussed the excellent care we provide there. Tony Jordan, Clinical Operations Manager, Hem/Onc Inpatient Unit, described our continued successes curing childhood cancers. Representative Johnson was also interested in learning how Medicaid impacts Children's and our efforts to advocate for pediatric resident funding and coverage for autism treatment.

During the tour, the Congressman met Vernell Dunson, a patient in the Aflac Cancer Center. Vernell, who is from Tifton, had never met a Congressman before. They talked about Vernell's interests in NFL football and professional goal of becoming a nurse one day.

After departing the Aflac Cancer Center, the Congressman remarked that his "heart was warmed" by what he had seen at Egleston. He is very concerned about the healthcare problems facing our country, but was inspired by the care that Children's provides to the most critically-ill children in Georgia. He believes the nation needs to continue searching for new ways to deliver healthcare that treats the patient—not just the condition, and Children's should continue to advocate for innovative models of care that increase quality and reduce costs.

Children's will continue advocating for the pressing issues affecting pediatric healthcare delivery in Georgia among Georgia's Congressional Delegation in 2013.



Georgia Congressman David Scott Visits Egleston

On Monday, August 20, U.S. Congressman David Scott (D-13) visited Children's at Egleston. The Congressman and his District Director, Chandra Harris, toured the CICU, Aflac Inpatient Unit and Emergency Department.

The Congressman was also able to hear about the progress we have made with our Strong4Life program, received an update regarding the Marcus Autism Center, and heard about the Coalition of Independent Children's Hospitals policy development around pediatric Medicaid.

The Congressman was extremely impressed by what he saw at Children's, from the high-level of care provided to every patient in the CICU, to the cleanliness of the hospital. "You could eat off the floors," he remarked as the group walked from the CICU past the Family Resource Library on the second floor.



In our discussions after the tour, the Congressman shared his concern for the increasingly bitter bi-partisan nature of the current political environment, the budget struggles that continue to lie ahead for the country, and praised Children's for its work providing excellent care to the children of Georgia.

Children's is grateful to the Congressman for spending time with us at Egleston and learning more about the work we do!

Children's Lends a Helping Hand at Congressional Health Fair

Children's participated in Congressman David Scott's 8th annual health fair in Jonesboro on Saturday, Aug. 18. This event helped to provide important medical screenings and assistance to residents within six metro area counties.

Children's Asthma Center, Diabetes Program, Marcus Autism Center and Strong4Life were all participants at the fair. Activities included diabetes awareness and pulmonary screenings, as well as photos with Hope and Will. Additionally, children enjoyed learning about healthy snacks and how to be Strong4Life.



More than 800 individuals stopped by the Children's table to gather important health information for their kids. Several individuals were particularly impacted by the pulmonary screenings provided by Children's Asthma Center. Congressman Scott's health fair was a tremendous success and helped to provide an opportunity for Children's to disseminate much needed information to families in the community.



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