



Nemours Office of Policy and Advocacy
1201 15th Street
Suite 350
Washington, DC 20005

November 20, 2009

Chairperson Blanche Lincoln and Ranking Member Saxby Chambliss
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairperson Lincoln and Ranking Member Chambliss:

Thank you for holding a hearing on “Reauthorization of U.S. Child Nutrition Programs: Opportunities to Fight Hunger and Improve Child Health” (November 17, 2009). Nemours commends your efforts to ensure that every child has access to healthy foods, especially in the current economic climate. We agree that child nutrition programs offer a critical safety net to ensure proper nutrition. We also believe that these programs can help children and their families establish healthy habits which will last a lifetime, such as consuming health promoting amounts of fruits and vegetables and adoption of regular physical activity. These healthy habits are critical to reversing the obesity epidemic in our children, which will lead to fewer obese adults and lower health care costs.

It was extremely encouraging to hear Secretary Vilsack’s comments regarding the importance of continuing to support obesity prevention in early education and child care settings for children ages 5 and under. Nemours, a premier integrated child health system directly serving 250,000 children mainly in Delaware and North Central Florida, has taken on the challenge of putting a prevention-oriented child health system into practice by integrating medical care with community based prevention to improve the health of children. Collaborating with policymakers, government agencies and child care providers, Nemours Health and Prevention Services identified best practice nutrition standards and secured licensing regulations to require these standards in child care centers. NHPS further supported this policy change by providing hands-on training and technical assistance on healthy eating and physical activity to child care providers so they could put the policy into

Alfred I. duPont
Hospital for Children
Wilmington, Delaware

Nemours Cardiac Center
Wilmington, Delaware

Nemours Center for
Children's Health Media

Nemours Children's Clinic
Jacksonville, Florida
Orlando, Florida
Pensacola, Florida
Wilmington, Delaware

Nemours Health &
Prevention Services

Nemours Health Clinic
Wilmington, Delaware

Nemours Mansion & Gardens

Nemours.org

KidsHealth.org

PedsEducation.org

practice. 12.4% of children ages 2 to 5 years are overweight or obese, and studies show that obese children are likely to become obese adults. In order to reverse this trend, we must expand opportunities to promote healthy habits early in life.

Nemours places great emphasis on supporting best policies, practices and tools in early care and education settings as a means to promote children's health from a very young age, thereby increasing the likelihood that these children will grow up healthy. The Secretary's mention of partnering with Sesame Street resonates with Nemours, who has partnered with Sesame Workshop to develop a Healthy Habits for Life physical activity and nutrition resource kit for caregivers of 3- to 5-year-olds in the child care setting. Secretary Vilsack's keynote address at our *Healthy Kids, Healthy Future* conference this past September, acknowledging the importance of addressing children's health from a very young age, continues to echo among children's health advocates and experts, who feel strongly that prevention at a young age is paramount.

Nemours currently endorses the S934/HR1324 Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act of 2009. We recommend that the Committee consider this bill as they reauthorize the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. We also feel strongly that improved standards for nutrition the Child and Adult Care Food Program would significantly impact the overall wellness and health outcomes of young children; thereby setting the stage for healthy eating and physical activity over an entire lifespan.

We look forward to working with the Committee as you move forward with this Reauthorization. We invite you to visit Delaware to learn more about the important policy changes that are now in practice, helping children develop healthy eating and physical activity habits early in life. Please feel free to contact me at 302-444-9059 for more information or to arrange a visit.

We respectfully request that this letter be included in the hearing record.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie I. Chang".

Debbie I. Chang, MPH
Vice President, Policy and Prevention
Nemours