



Training for Pediatricians Helps Ensure Access to Care for Kids

Public support is crucial to pediatric medical education

The *Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program* (CHGME) is a national effort that supports the training of pediatricians and pediatric specialists across America. It's a vital program that helps ensure access to care for the nearly 75 million children living in the U.S. Here are a few key facts about the CHGME program.

CHGME fixes an unintended inequity in the system

Provisions within Medicare ensure consistent funding to support the training of physicians who treat adults. Children's teaching hospitals, however, receive virtually no Medicare graduate medical education (GME) support. As a result, Congress enacted CHGME in 2000 to provide children's teaching hospitals with federal GME support comparable to the level of Medicare GME funding. Even so, CHGME is underfunded relative to what Medicare GME provides to adult teaching hospitals.

CHGME has a proven track record

Before CHGME was enacted in 1999, the pediatric physician workforce was decreasing. During the 1990s, the number of residents in freestanding children's teaching hospitals had declined over 13 percent. Since the enactment, children's teaching hospitals have reversed this trend, increasing their training by 35 percent and, each year, training more than 5,000 pediatricians and pediatric specialists. The Children's Hospital Colorado has trained 110 new pediatric providers

since 2006 and about 8 out of 10 of them have stayed right here in Colorado.

Without CHGME, children will wait longer to see the physicians they need

According to a 2010 survey of children's hospitals, shortages exist in many pediatric specialties, creating geographic pockets of the country without any specialists at all. There are also shortages of primary care pediatricians in some sections of the country. Shortages contribute to wait times for appointments that can stretch to three months. Without a strong CHGME program in place, children will wait even longer, going without the care they need.

Children's hospitals are critical to ensuring an adequate workforce

Though children's teaching hospitals represent just 1 percent of all hospitals, they train 40 percent of general pediatricians, 43 percent of all pediatric specialists and the majority of pediatric researchers. Chances are that your child has received medical care—whether a basic wellness checkup or highly specialized care for conditions like diabetes, asthma, heart defects, traumatic injury and more—from a physician who trained in a children's hospital.

CHGME is a unique program

CHGME is the only federal program that reliably supports the training of pediatricians and pediatric specialists in children's teaching hospitals. State-based efforts to support training through Medicaid are uneven and have not demonstrated meaningful success in increasing the pediatric physician workforce.

For more information, please contact Heidi Baskfield • (720) 777-8526 • baskfield.heidi@tchden.org