

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 6, 2006

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**SENATOR KENNEDY ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION BILL**

Senator Edward M. Kennedy today praised members of the House of Representatives for its recent vote to reauthorize vital funding for pediatric graduate medical education programs.

The Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education Program funds training for physicians in the nation's 60 independent children's teaching hospitals. Congress approved reauthorization of the federal program through 2011, with an annual funding cap of \$330 million.

The Senate had approved the bill unanimously, and the House approved it late last week before beginning the current congressional recess.

"Children's hospitals are an indispensable resource for the nation," Senator Kennedy said. "They excel in providing specialized care for sick children and training future pediatricians, specialists and researchers. The reauthorization of this Graduate Medical Education program will ensure that these indispensable hospitals continue to thrive in the years ahead."

Before Congress launched the program in 1999, pediatric graduate medical education received almost no federal funding—less than half of one percent of the funding that other independent hospital training programs received. As a result, the majority of independent children's teaching hospitals lacked critical funding for basic patient care. Senator Kennedy led the effort to establish and fund the federal program.

Leaders of children's hospitals fully supported the program's recent reauthorization and expressed gratitude at its passage. "We are especially grateful to Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) for his support of this program," said James Mandell, MD, President and CEO of Children's Hospital Boston. "He helped to create the original program in 2000, has led the fight for funding among his colleagues each year, and has been very focused on assuring passage of this legislation to extend the program in this session."

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