



January 16, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin
U.S. Senate
Chair, Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee
SD-184
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin:

The American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) is requesting your assistance on an issue of the utmost importance. We urge you to include \$69 million in the forthcoming continuing resolution to allow the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue work on its congressionally mandated National Children's Study. Funding for this study was included in the House and Senate versions of the fiscal year (FY) 2007 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Unfortunately, Congress failed to reach agreement and pass this bill before the end of the 109th Congress.

During the 106th Session of Congress, the House of Representatives and Senate overwhelmingly passed the Children's Health Act of 2000, which designated a number of key areas where additional federal research and improved coordination could lead to advances in the diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of childhood conditions. Among the directives included in the statute was a mandate for NIH to conduct a longitudinal pediatric research project to assess "the physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial environmental influences on children's well-being." According to NIH:

"The National Children's Study will be one of the richest information resources available for answering questions related to children's health and development and will form the basis of child health guidance, interventions, and policy for generations to come. It is anticipated that the preliminary results from the first years of the study will be available in 2008-2009."

These advances will only occur if Congress provides the funds needed to keep this project moving forward. We believe the short and long-term gains in children's health will far exceed the amount of money needed to fund the study. AACC strongly supports this children's health initiative and urges you to include \$69 million for this study in the forthcoming continuing resolution to fund federal agencies through the remainder of this year. We look forward to working with you on this most important issue.

Chairman Harkin
January 16, 2007
Page Two

By way of background, AACC is the principal association of professional laboratory scientists--including MDs, PhDs and medical technologists. AACC's members develop and use chemical concepts, procedures, techniques and instrumentation in health-related investigations and work in hospitals, independent laboratories and the diagnostics industry worldwide. The AACC provides international leadership in advancing the practice and profession of clinical laboratory science and its application to health care. If you have any questions, please call me at (510) 231-1728, or Vince Stine, Director, Government Affairs, at (202) 835-8721.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John E. Sherwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background behind the text.

John E. Sherwin, PhD
Past President, AACC