



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

April 27, 2010

The Honorable Jared Polis
501 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Polis:

As an integrated child health system directly serving over 250,000 children in Delaware and Florida, Nemours strongly supports your Nutrition Education and Wellness in Schools Act (NEW Schools Act, H.R. 5090).

Nemours has grown to be one of the nation's leaders in the fight against childhood obesity. As a founding member of Partnership for a Healthier America, a foundation working alongside the First Lady in her *Lets Move!* campaign, Nemours brings model expertise and experience, specifically in the realm of developing and implementing successful training, tools and technical assistance to support children's wellness. The March edition of *Health Affairs* highlights the results of a study examining Nemours' multi-sector approach to obesity prevention in Delaware. Through policy and practice changes in child care, schools, primary care, and in the community, Nemours has helped to stem the increase in prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity in Delaware.

The provisions in the NEW Schools Act to strengthen current local school wellness policies mirror the strategic efforts that Nemours has taken to support implementation of these policies in Delaware. Nemours serves as a model for helping school districts develop and implement successful local wellness policies around the country by:

- Initiating a series of collaborative learning sessions to help school districts develop and implement school wellness policies that support healthy development including providing opportunities for physical activity during the day (in addition to physical education class);
- Offering and promoting healthy food and beverage options throughout the school campus - including vending machines, snack bars, school stores, fundraisers, and celebrations;
- Ensuring that health education is offered to students and includes information on nutrition, physical activity, and screen-time reduction; and

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

- Providing health education for staff, who serve as important role models for students.

As a part of this collaborative, interdisciplinary district wellness committees, including teachers, principals, school health professionals, board of education members and school administrators, are engaged in a process of assessing current wellness policies, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing plans to address those areas. Schools are provided with user-friendly tools, hands-on technical assistance, and a forum for sharing successes, challenges, and solutions with colleagues from other schools and districts.

Implementation of new policy and practice changes are not sustainable, however, if appropriate resources are not made available. Establishment of the Wellness and Nutrition Network, which supports multidisciplinary coordination and collaboration at the federal, state and local levels, would enhance technical assistance, training and dissemination of model materials and best practices necessary to support child nutrition programs.

Nemours recognizes the importance of starting early in life to promote healthy child development. We have developed and implemented age appropriate tools and training for child care settings. Our on-the-ground experience in this area has been successful and is an example of the benefits of the approach in your legislation.

The NEW Schools Act would strengthen the quality of local school wellness policies and increase technical assistance and training as part of the Wellness and Nutrition Network—two key strategies in combating childhood obesity.

Nemours applauds your dedication to such an important issue and looks forward to continuing to work with you as you move forward with this bill.

Sincerely,

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

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