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Children's Hospice International World Congress to Focus on All-inclusive Healthcare "Completing the Circle of Care"

US Congressman John Murtha to receive honors

Alexandria, VA— Children's Hospice International (CHI) will hold its 14th World Congress on November 4 – 6, 2002 at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. This year's Congress is being held with Windber Hospice.

U.S. Congressman John P. Murtha (D-PA), and Mrs. Murtha, will welcome hundreds of World Congress participants at a reception in the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center at Windber Medical Center, Windber, PA on Sunday, November 3rd from 4:30 – 6:30 pm. Congressman Murtha will give the opening address on Monday, November 4th at 8:00 a.m. in the Living/Learning Center, University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, PA.

During the three-day conference, healthcare leaders from around the world will focus on the challenges today's healthcare system faces to meet the needs of children. The program also will include discussions about a groundbreaking model in children's healthcare known as CHI PACC[®]. The CHI Program for All-inclusive Care for Children and their families (CHI PACC[®]) provides a continuum of interdisciplinary care for children from time of diagnosis of a life-threatening condition with hope for a cure, through bereavement if a cure is not attained. The purpose of the conference is to provide these hospice and pediatric palliative care experts an opportunity to present and discuss findings of programs of all-inclusive care for children and share related experiences.

Leaders in pediatric healthcare from as far away as Africa and Australia will speak on the importance of increasing the development and expansion of children's hospice programs. The CHI PACC[®] model innovations include making services available to any child of any age with a life threatening condition. In CHI PACC[®] the child and family are the focus for care and decision-making. Community-based palliative care is available concurrent with disease treatments aimed at cure.

Ann Armstrong-Dailey, Founding Director and CEO of Children's Hospice International summed up its mission "Our ultimate goal is to so ingrain the hospice concept into pediatrics that it isn't considered a separate specialty, rather, an integral part of health care for children and adolescents."

CHI PACC® development started in the mid-nineties with the involvement of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and Congressman James Moran (D-VA) who first introduced CHI to the US Congress. It was Congressman Moran's support that began the funding of the six state demonstration projects. US Senator Bob Bennett (R-UT), also an early supporter of CHI, first introduced CHI PACC® in the Senate. These early efforts produced a \$1,000,000 appropriation for CHI to help demonstration states, working with children's hospitals, hospices, Medicaid departments and other stakeholders, develop comprehensive community-based programs to care for children with life-threatening diseases.

As projects developed so did support and other national leaders such as US Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), Ranking member, Appropriations Sub-committee Labor HHS; US Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman, Health, Education, Labor & Pension (HELP) Committee; US Senator William Frist, MD (R-TN), Ranking member HELP Committee, and US Congressman Joel Hefley (R-CO) enthusiastically stepped forward to champion legislation affecting palliative care.

According to Armstrong-Dailey "This unwavering support shows us that when it comes to all-inclusive care for children with life-threatening conditions and their families, Congress is truly bi-partisan."

This year Congressman Murtha is being honored for his leadership to expand the CHI PACC® reach beyond the current six state demonstration projects. The current states implementing CHI PACC® are Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, New York, Utah and Virginia. In 2003, Congressman Murtha plans to expand the program to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Maryland so that families and dependents of the men and women in the military will have access to this palliative and hospice care for their children. Walter Reed serves all branches of service and the Murtha plan will be the pilot project for the Department of Defense world-wide. Congressman Murtha also plans to expand CHI PACC® to the Children's Hospitals of Pittsburgh and Hershey, PA.

CHI, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1983 to provide resources, care, support, and advocacy for children with life-threatening conditions, as well as support for their families. CHI also offers education, training and technical assistance to the health care professionals caring for this special patient population. In 1983, of the 1,400 hospices in the United States, only four were able to accept children. Today, due largely to the work of CHI and its supporters, thousands of hospices around the nation are able to consider accepting children.

For more information about CHI and the 14th World Congress visit www.chionline.org.

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