



March 4, 2008

Senator Robert Garagiola  
104 James Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Senate Bill (SB) 577

Dear Senator Garagiola:

Children's National Medical Center applauds you for introducing SB 577, the "Maryland Covers All Children Act of 2009." We commend you for your leadership in introducing legislation to achieve universal health care coverage for Maryland's children.

Located just three miles from the Maryland border, Children's National annually devotes nearly 60 percent of our inpatient care to children from Maryland. At Children's National, we take very seriously our role as a critical pediatric health care safety net for Maryland's children and families. In hospital Fiscal Year 2008, 1 in 4 hospital admissions was a Maryland Medicaid recipient, and 44 percent of our total Maryland admissions were Medicaid recipients.

According to 2007 data from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of Children's Hospitals, nearly 10 percent, or more than 143,000 Maryland children, are uninsured. More than 75 percent of these children are currently eligible for either Medicaid or the Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP), but remain unenrolled. Our experience caring for both insured and uninsured children finds that children who lack health insurance are generally sicker and are more likely to incur higher health care costs from lack of access to timely preventive care.

SB 577 would require parents to provide health insurance for their children and allow families with incomes above 300 percent of the federal poverty level to buy into the MCHP. This approach will help to ensure that all children, regardless of family income status, will have access to comprehensive health coverage.

On behalf of Children's National Medical Center – including our physicians, nurses, staff and volunteers – thank you for making health care for Maryland's children a priority. We are proud to serve Maryland's children and look forward to working with you to ensure every child has health coverage and access to affordable, high quality health care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacqueline D. Bowens". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline D. Bowens  
Executive Vice President  
Chief Government & External Affairs Officer  
Children's National Medical Center