



March 4, 2008

Delegate Peter Hammen, Chairman
Delegate Shane Pendergrass, Vice Chairman
House Health & Government Operations Committee
241 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill 1311—Support

Dear Chairman Hammen and Vice Chairman Pendergrass:

Children's National Medical Center (Children's National) supports HB 1311, "State Designations - Walking as the State Exercise." Children's National applauds Delegate Bill Bronrott for working to make Maryland a healthier state by establishing walking as the official state exercise.

Children's National, a 283 bed not-for-profit academic medical center, is located in Washington, DC, but serves the pediatric health care needs of the broader Washington metropolitan region. Located just three miles from the Maryland border, Children's National annually devotes nearly 60% of our inpatient care to children from Maryland. With five outpatient centers in Maryland and specialty care services provided in eight Maryland locations, Children's National is proud to be one of the largest providers of high quality pediatric primary, specialty and emergency care to Maryland's children and families.

The Trust for America's Health 2007 report, *F as in Fat*, estimates 24 percent of adults in Maryland are obese and 13 percent of children ages 10-17 are overweight. The same report estimates 16 percent of high school students in Maryland are overweight and at risk of obesity. At Children's National, we are seeing children with complications from obesity that are normally exhibited as an adult, such as diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, liver disease, sleep apnea, and heart disease.

There is no magic pill that will solve the problem of childhood obesity. While the factors that contribute to childhood obesity are complex and many, we do know that exercise is critical to losing weight and leading a healthy lifestyle. Children's National supports Delegate Bronrott's creative approach to promoting activities that increase the health and well-being of the children and families of Maryland and urges the HGO Committee to give HB 1311 a favorable report.

Sincerely,

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

CC: Members of the HGO Committee
Delegate Bronrott