

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 23, 2015

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Services, and Education
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 156
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 131
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee continue to support congenital heart disease-related public health research and surveillance initiatives at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) focused on addressing the lifelong needs of the growing population of Americans with congenital heart disease.

Congenital heart disease (CHD) is the most common birth defect and the leading cause of birth defect-related infant mortality. Nearly 1 in 100 babies are born with a CHD - five percent of which will not live to see their first birthday. Even for those who receive successful intervention, it is not a cure. Children and adults born with a CHD require ongoing, costly, specialized cardiac care, and face a lifelong risk of permanent disability and premature death. As a result, healthcare utilization among the CHD population is significantly higher than the general population. It is estimated that compared to their peers, the medical costs for individuals with congenital heart disease are 10 to 20 times greater. Hospitalization costs for pediatric patients alone total more than \$5.6 billion each year, which is 15 percent of all hospitalization costs for patients 20 years of age and younger.

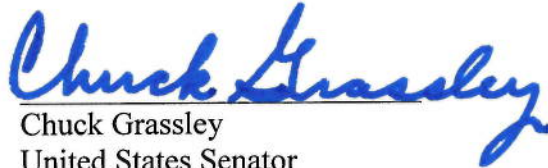
Previous Congressional investment for congenital heart disease activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) has funded initial innovative surveillance research among individuals with congenital heart defects, which has led to the standardization of research methods and an increased understanding of the public health burden of this condition. Continued federal investment is necessary to provide rigorous epidemiological and longitudinal public health surveillance and research on infants, children, adolescents and adults to better understand congenital heart disease across the lifespan, improve outcomes and reduce costs.

We thank you and commend you for your leadership in ensuring that our federal commitment to investments that improve our nation's health outcomes for many diseases and disorders, such as congenital heart disease, do no falter.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



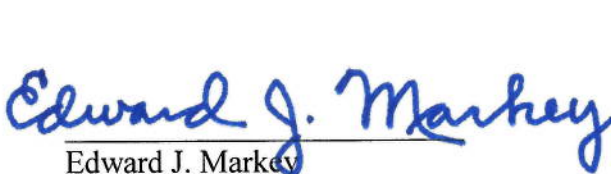
Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



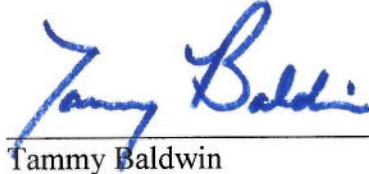
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator