

# ROOTING FOR KIDS!

News for The Children's Hospital's  
Grassroots Advocates



The Children's Hospital



## Kids Voting Event!

The Children's Hospital hosted a *Kids Voting* event from 11am - 1pm on November 4. This event was designed to reinforce with children the importance of voting, and to engage their parents and other adults in the process. In addition to a kids voting booth where children cast their votes for President, volunteers delivered "mail-in ballots" to patient rooms so that all interested children were able to participate. Additionally, there were patriotic snacks and giveaways, as well as fun and educational activities about elections and government for kids and grownups alike. First Lady Jeannie Ritter joined Children's for this event by reading election related books to children and delivering mail-in ballots to patient rooms. After the voting booth closed, the votes were tallied. Older children chose between the Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates with Barack Obama taking the lead over John McCain, 40-12. The younger children were asked what they like better, dogs or cats. Cats ruled, 11-7.



## Be a Champ for Children!

Kids don't know politics, but every day they are affected by public policies and laws. It's up to grownups to speak up and make sure those policies and laws are good for kids' health and well-being. On October 23 & 24, The Children's Hospital offered a free seminar for people interested in standing up for kids' health and well-being through public policy advocacy. All were welcome to attend this event led by famed

advocacy leader Nancy Amidei. The training was held around the timing of the elections to capitalize on interest in legislative advocacy and to inspire participants to take advantage of opportunities to vote, influence candidates and new legislators, and be a driving force for children's health in the coming year. This was a great opportunity for beginner advocates to get comfortable with the basics of advocacy and served as an excellent refresher for more experienced advocates. Missed the training but interested in learning more about legislative advocacy? Please visit [www.thechildrenshospital.org/advocacy](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org/advocacy) and click on "Tips for Successful Advocacy."

## Children's Mental Health

### *Congress Enacts Mental Health Parity Legislation as Part of Economic Stabilization Bill*

The landmark \$700 billion financial rescue bill that President Bush signed into law on October 3 was a landmark for mental health advocates, as well. The economic stabilization bill included the provisions of mental health parity legislation, a major policy priority for the mental health community for the past 12 years. The "Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health and

Addiction Equity Act of 2008" ends differing health insurance coverage for children and adults who require mental health and addiction treatment. The bill provides parity between medical-surgical and mental health and addiction benefits in plans that offer mental health coverage. The bill also prohibits health insurance plans from imposing day and visit limits or applying different deductibles, co-payments, out-of-network charges and other financial requirements for treatment. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees are exempt from the parity requirements. Most employers and group health plans do not provide equal coverage for mental health care and will, therefore, need to adjust their benefits to comply with the new law.

Mental health parity legislation had been approved by the Senate in 2007 but was held up in the House over a debate about the types of conditions that would be covered. Once that dispute was resolved, and only three months after Congress established parity in cost-sharing for mental health benefits under Medicare, the bill became law. The mental health parity law goes into effect January 1, 2010 and is expected to improve coverage for 113 million people.

For additional resources, please visit:

- National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI): <http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=October11&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=67625>
- Mental Health America: <http://www.nmha.org/index.cfm?objectID=C3162C54-1372-4D20-C8E62AB28BB3FF5B>



## Advocacy Spotlight: Leslie Feuerborn

### *Interview with Leslie Feuerborn, one of The Children's Hospital's Active Advocates*

**Why are you a member of the Grassroots Advocacy Network?** I am a member of the GAN so that I can stay current on advocacy issues that impact children - especially those that can reduce accidental injuries in children, the leading cause of death in children. In particular, I am interested in primary seat belt legislation, booster seat upgrade, helmet legislation, etc.

**Why is it important to have a voice for Colorado children?** There are so many issues that impact the health of children that aren't top of mind for many legislators. I believe it is important for parents, healthcare professionals and others to speak up for kids so that our laws and policies have a positive impact on their health now and as adults.

**What is the most rewarding part of being part of the GAN?** Being involved with a network that has an impact and can help bring about change. I've attended a number of GAN events over the years including advocacy trainings, Day at the Capitol, and most Lunch and Learns. They really have helped me understand the legislative process much better and how individual citizens working together can make a difference.

**What do you feel are the top three most important healthcare issues facing children in our state?** Health and wellness (nutrition & physical activity), access to preventive care and getting every child buckled up on every ride.

**Everyone's busy these days, can you please discuss how easy it is to become an advocate...and how a little effort goes a long way...** It's incredibly easy to become an advocate just by signing up for GAN through its many promotions or by going to the hospital's website and signing up. I also include a pitch at every new nurse orientation I teach. It is so easy to respond to the GAN alerts that come directly to my email. I like that the GAN provides

me with the background information on the issue and with an email message that I can use directly or edit with my individual thoughts and opinions.

*News, updates, and events from The Children's Hospital Grassroots Advocacy Network...*

**2009 Legislative Session!**

The 2009 legislative session begins on January 7, 2009. Stay tuned for our 2009 Advocacy Priorities which will soon be finalized...visit

[www.thechildrenshospital.org/advocacy](http://www.thechildrenshospital.org/advocacy) for updates, advocacy tools, and upcoming events!



**Advocacy Lunch & Learn: Thursday, November 20**

Reforming health care is among American voters' top issues. To ensure all children and more American adults receive affordable health care coverage and high quality health care at the right time at the right place, we will all need to work together. On November 20, 2008, the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions and PricewaterhouseCoopers will jointly conduct **Proposals to Policy: A National Conversation on Health Care Reform**, a broadcast program from the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

Susan Dentzer of the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer will moderate a panel of health care experts, leaders from the incoming administration, and Congress as they discuss president-elect Barack Obama's health care reform proposals. The Children's Hospital Public Affairs Department is pleased to host this broadcast, which will be streamed live at 11:00am on November 20 in the Mt. Oxford Auditorium. Light lunch provided free of charge. [RSVP required](#).

**Time:** 11am - 12noon (arrive at 10:45am)

**Location:** Mt. Oxford Auditorium (2nd floor), The Children's Hospital, 13123 E. 16th Ave

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The Children's Hospital  
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