

# Nemours Commends Biden Orders on Racial Equity and School Reopening Support

*Executive Orders' goals complement existing efforts from Nemours Children's Health System*

**WASHINGTON (February 1, 2021)** – Nemours Children's Health System commends the signing of the executive orders by President Biden acknowledging and addressing systemic racism, and providing support to schools and early childcare providers to allow in-person education to resume or continue. Collective action at the local, regional, and federal level will provide a stronger foundation for advancing the health and well-being of children nationwide.

## **Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government**

Given the deep impact of long-standing inequities, racism must be addressed as a public health issue. All of us are stewards of our nation's most vulnerable populations, our children. As such, we must continually examine and refine our approach to ensure we cultivate a culture of inclusivity, diversity, humanity, health and respect for all.

Among the list of actions, the new EO specifically calls for:

- The Office of Management and Budget and other federal agencies to conduct assessments on whether agency policies and actions create or exacerbate barriers to full and equal participation by all eligible individuals;
- The federal government to allocate resources to address "historic failure to invest sufficiently, justly, and equally in underserved communities;"
- The establishment of an Equitable Data Working Group to ensure federal data reflect the diversity of the American people.

In Nemours' own work, concerted efforts to embrace the principles of diversity and inclusion aim to achieve goals similar to this Executive Order and efforts to strengthen data collection will help us overcome barriers to health equity. Strengthening its workplace culture in this regard is improving capacity to advance the health of all children. Nemours' DRIVE (Diversity, anti-Racism, Inclusion, Value, Equity) Initiative has declared Nemours as an anti-racism organization, optimized recruiting and hiring practices to promote diversity, evaluated compensation and benefit equity, created an open forum for critical and honest conversations and developed mandated Associate education in this area.

## **Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers**

The use of federal resources to enable in-person education to resume or continue nationwide will further evidence-based recommendations for creating safe, in-person learning environments.

This EO specifically calls for:

- Adequate testing and the needed data to inform safe reopening and ongoing contact tracing for elementary and secondary schools and childcare providers;
- Guidance to providers to address the needs of children and families including trauma-informed care, behavioral health supports and other family supports;
- Technical assistance to States, localities, Tribes and territories to distribute COVID-19 relief funds to child care providers.

During the pandemic, Nemours and other healthcare systems have developed best practices for keeping families and providers safe while continuing the delivery of crucial in-person care. For example, our Value-Based Services Organization identified concerning trends of missed preventive care during Spring 2020. To address this issue, Nemours' care coordinators reached out to families to understand their concerns and challenges and then developed targeted solutions to these obstacles—such as food insecurity, transportation, and housing needs. Nemours also created a hybrid approach to well-care visits by offering telehealth visits combined with outdoor immunization tents. This ingenuity resulted in a 4.6% increase in patient immunizations from January – September 2020, compared with the same period in 2019.

Nemours applauds the Administration's acknowledgment that working across sectors and across federal agencies will help improve all factors that impact the health of children. Such collaboration should be nurtured and further developed. Nemours, Mental Health America, First Focus on Children, The Education Redesign Lab at Harvard University, Forum for Youth Investment, and the Children's Funding Project, have called for the establishment of a White House Office on Children and Youth. This interagency structure would bring together federal leaders to prioritize and coordinate children's needs and create a structure for much needed collaboration.

Nemours National Office of Policy and Prevention will continue to track these issues and support efforts to focus on the issues for creating the healthiest generation of children.

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## **About Nemours Children's Health System**

Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont

Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in five states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours the Nemours app.

Established as The Nemours Foundation through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, Nemours provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to families in the communities it serves.

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