



CHILDREN'S HOSPICE INTERNATIONAL

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SECRETARY THOMPSON RECEIVES 'THE MATTIE STEPANEK CHAMPION AWARD' FROM CHILDREN'S HOSPICE INTERNATIONAL FOR HIS DEDICATION TO HELPING CHILDREN IN NEED

WASHINGTON, D.C. – At a stellar tribute Wednesday in the nation's Capitol, health care leaders from around the country convened to honor former Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy G. Thompson for his leadership on a national program benefiting children with life-threatening conditions, their families and health care providers.

“Children's Hospice International's Program for All-Inclusive Care for Children and their Families (CHI PACC) is an example of a successful federal-state partnership that can have an immediate effect on our children in need. I am proud to have helped shape this program during my tenure at HHS,” said **Secretary Thompson** upon accepting the award.

“During his outstanding career, Tommy Thompson has become one of our nation's most respected public officials. It has been my pleasure to work with such a fine leader who has such compassion and commitment for helping people and getting results,” said **HHS Deputy Secretary Alex Azar**.

“Secretary Thompson provided the leadership, vision, and compassion to direct CMS in the development and approval of innovative waivers such as the one approved for Florida to support the CHI PACC initiative,” said Dennis G. Smith of CMS.

Virginia is expected to be one of the leading states implementing CHI PACC, just behind Colorado and Utah. Both states anticipate receiving their CMS waivers in late 2005. Florida was the first state to obtain its waiver for CHI PACC in July 2005.

In a letter read at the reception, **U.S. Congressman Jim Moran (D-VA)** wrote: “Knowing that the CHI PACC program is dedicated to a young hero – Mattie Stepanek – who taught adults the lessons of compassion, tenacity and determination, I believe it fitting that this honor be bestowed on Secretary Thompson, whose career embodies that philosophy of hope, hard work and discipline.”

Moran noted in a letter read by his chief of staff, **Phil Sunderland**, that he has requested an appropriation in the FY2006 Federal Budget to support the national CHI PACC effort.

Thompson also weighed in on that issue. “This fall, children's health care will continue to be a focus for debate. As policymakers look for solutions, I urge our Governors and members of Congress to learn more about this reform-minded program which can have a major impact on the quality of life for children and their families.”

Mattie Stepanek's mother, Jeni, regretted that she could not be at there. “I would really love to be there for Tommy. Mattie thought very highly of him as an advocate, and as a person,” she said.

“Secretary Thompson, you are truly a champion for these special children and families and everyone involved in caring for them,” said **CHI Founding Director Ann Armstrong-Dailey**. “It is with heartfelt gratitude that we present you with the Mattie Stepanek Champion Award.”

For more information about CHI contact 703.684.0330 or info@chionline.org.