



March 1, 2019

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin,

On behalf of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (Children's), thank you for work and leadership on the Early Detection to Stop Infant Abuse and Prevent Fatalities Act. This legislation is critical towards improving early recognition and intervention efforts to protect vulnerable infants and will help prevent many cases of abuse and related fatalities.

Children's is the largest non-for-profit, community-based child- and family-serving agency in Wisconsin. Children's provides child well-being services across the state to help children live in a safe and nurturing environment. Our Child Advocacy Center (CAC) network is the largest hospital-based network in the nation. CACs bring together a team of specially trained professionals to evaluate and investigate cases of child abuse, neglect and sexual abuse. Children's seven CACs and hospital-based advocacy and protection program care for more than 7,000 children each year. Additionally, Children's offers a multitude of child abuse and neglect prevention programs across the state aimed at keeping kids healthy and safe.

As you know, research conducted at Children's led by Dr. Lynn Sheets, Medical Director of Children's Child Advocacy & Protection Services Program, was the first to demonstrate that some infants evaluated for abuse had a previous history of relatively minor suspicious injuries. She coined these as "sentinel injuries" because of their importance as early warning signs of abuse or, rarely, life-threatening medical disorders. Specifically, previous sentinel injuries were identified in 27.5 percent of abused infants and 30 percent of infants who suffered abusive head trauma. Subsequent research has demonstrated similar rates of missed opportunities to identify abuse in young infants. Since this ground-breaking research, we have been working within our system and with partners across the state to raise awareness about sentinel injuries and develop best practices to detect and manage them.

Your legislation will help support our efforts to improve recognition of the earliest signs of physical abuse before the abuse escalates by authorizing the development and dissemination of evidence-based best practices and protocols to improve the detection and management of these sentinel injuries in infants.

Thank you for your recognition of this serious issue to improve the safety and well-being of children. We appreciate your leadership and support for the Early Detection to Stop Infant Abuse and Prevent Fatalities Act.

Sincerely,

Peggy Troy
President & CEO
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

