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# As Many Sick Kids Wait for Care, Upper Arlington Family Speaks Out for Preserving and Improving Children's Access to Health Care

Lashutka family represents Nationwide Children's Hospital and all patient families; travel to Washington, D.C. July 23-25 for the Children's Hospital Association's Family Advocacy Day



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Columbus, OH - 7/18/2012

As federal legislators continue to grapple over the best way to bring better health care to all Americans, children's health care hangs in the balance. That's why a local Upper Arlington family is taking their story to Washington, D.C. this month to ask Congress to take action to protect care for children in the face of proposed cuts to national health care programs kids rely on.

Ike Lashutka, 2, and his family will join nearly 30 other child patients and their families traveling to the nation's capital to help bring to life the importance of adequate funding for pediatric care as part of the Children's Hospital Association's Family Advocacy Day, taking place July 23-25, 2012. The event includes one-on-one congressional visits, a congressional luncheon, a tour of Washington and a celebratory dinner to honor the child patients known as Family Advocacy Day "All Stars."

The Lashutka family knows firsthand the value of quality pediatric care. They began their relationship with Nationwide Children's Hospital when Ike was just one month of age in January 2010. He was admitted with RSV (a respiratory infection), strep pneumonia and a collapsed lung. Unbeknownst to his parents, Nick and Megan Lashutka, Ike was actually going into septic shock. He ended up spending nine days in the PICU where he was placed on a ventilator and 12 machines that provided him with medicine, antibiotics and nutrition.

Today, Ike continues to receive on-going medical care from the specialists at Nationwide Children's. It is those on-going treatment plans that help Ike get back to being the vivacious 2 ½ -year-old he is. Ike, along with his three brothers, Kuyper, Duke and a twin, Drake, enjoy playing all activities that have to do with a ball, club, stick or bat. Many thanks to Nationwide Children's and the access to tremendous health care for keeping Ike with his fellow teammates – his family.

"We feel incredibly blessed for the specialized care and attention our son, Ike, received and continues to receive from the physicians and nurses at Nationwide Children's Hospital," said Nick Lashutka, Ike's father. "Timely access to pediatricians and specialists for all children is critical. We're taking our story to Washington to help our leaders recognize the need to

protect and preserve quality health care for kids like Ike all across the country.

Experts agree that several proposals have the potential to harm children's access to care.

- Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME), a national program solely devoted to helping children's hospitals train pediatricians and pediatric specialists, supports the training and development of nearly half of all pediatricians and pediatric specialists practicing in the U.S. Unfortunately, CHGME funding is far below the support needed to close the gap between demand for care and the supply of pediatric specialists. The result is a national shortage of pediatric specialists.
- Medicaid, a federal-state program that provides health coverage to one in three children faces proposals that would slash program funding. President Obama's fiscal year 2013 budget proposes Medicaid cuts of \$56 billion over a 10-year period. The House fiscal year 2013 budget proposes capping the amounts of funding states receive for Medicaid, which could negatively impact children's health care.

Ensuring that children have timely access to well-trained pediatricians and pediatric specialists should be a priority for Congress," said [Steve Allen, MD](#), chief executive officer of Nationwide Children's Hospital. "Specially trained health care providers are best able to meet the unique needs of children. Programs that support their work should be protected, not cut."

The Children's Hospital Association will release findings from a survey of children's hospitals to better understand the impact of pediatric specialist shortages on children's ability to access timely medical care. The release will occur during Family Advocacy Day (July 23–25).

#### **About the Children's Hospital Association**

The Children's Hospital Association advances child health through innovation in the quality, cost and delivery of care. Representing more than 220 children's hospitals, the Association is the voice of children's hospitals nationally. The Association advances public policy enabling hospitals to better serve children, and is the premier resource for pediatric data and analytics driving improved clinical and operational performance of member hospitals. Formed in 2011, the Association brings together the strengths and talents of three organizations: Child Health Corporation of America (CHCA), National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI) and National Association of Children's Hospitals (N.A.C.H.).

For more information on Family Advocacy Day, visit [www.childrenshospitals.net](http://www.childrenshospitals.net) or follow the families on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/childrenshospitals> or Twitter, @speaknowforkids, #FAD12.

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