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Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to Lead Equity-Focused Grant

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK — The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) has been selected by Nemours Children’s Health System (Nemours) to lead Project HOPE (Harnessing Opportunity for Positive, Equitable Early Childhood Development) in Oklahoma. One of only four states to be chosen for this grant, for the next 18 months OPSR will work with a local community to enhance equity in Oklahoma. Specifically, Project HOPE is designed to generate progress toward equitable outcomes for young children (prenatal to five) and their families by supporting state leaders, cross-sector state teams and local coalitions.

“OPSR is thrilled to be selected for Project HOPE. Twenty years ago, Oklahoma pioneered cutting-edge early childhood programs. We know from research that these programs work. But, too many children are still entering school behind their peers. Project HOPE will provide an equity lens through which Oklahoma can understand why this is happening as well as create innovative and effective changes. We look forward to working with Nemours and our other state partners on this important topic,” said Debra Andersen, OPSR executive director.

Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, this project is led by a consortium of three partner organizations including Nemours, Boston Medical Center’s Vital Village Network and the BUILD Initiative. Nemours will directly support OPSR to advance the vision that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity or family income, has the best opportunity to achieve optimal health and well-being. Moreover, Nemours will assist OPSR with technical assistance, training, strategic planning and other customized resources.

Bill Doenges, OPSR Foundation president, said, “We are honored to be the recipient of the Project HOPE grant and of the technical assistance provided to support Oklahoma in reducing disparities. We have created an Early Learning Equity and Diversity (E-LEAD) team comprised of state leaders to implement the goals of Project HOPE.”

Under Project HOPE, OPSR and their community partner will focus on better aligning systems that support young children and families (e.g. health, early childhood and family support); increasing access to programs that will improve outcomes for young children; and protecting and expanding state policies that support children and their families. This focus on state systems programs and policies will allow Oklahoma to make a sustainable, positive impact on the lives of children and their families. In addition, both OPSR and Nemours will share lessons from Project HOPE to support other states and communities in their efforts to reduce inequity.

“Nemours is thrilled to launch HOPE in Oklahoma, where we look forward to working with the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness to help children and families lead healthier families,” said Debbie I. Chang, MPH, senior vice president of Policy and Prevention for Nemours Children’s Health System. “Through HOPE, Nemours and partners will collaborate to enhance coordination between agencies, improve families’ access to essential programs and services, and increase local capacity to enable young children to thrive.”

To learn more about the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, visit www.opsrfoundation.org. Or for more information on Project HOPE, see www.projecthopelaunch.com.

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About Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

In 2003, Governor Brad Henry signed HB 1094, which created the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) and added Oklahoma to a growing list of states that recognize more action is required to successfully support families and children from birth to preschool — thus improving school readiness. Together, through both public and private partnerships, we work to help children arrive at school with the knowledge, skills and physical and emotional health to achieve their dreams. Today, our mission is to lead Oklahoma in coordinating an early childhood system that strengthens families and ensures all children are ready for school. For more information, visit www.opsrfoundation.org.

About Nemours

Nemours (NAH-mors) is an [internationally recognized children’s health system](#) that owns and operates the [Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children](#) in Wilmington, Delaware and the [Nemours Children’s Hospital](#) in Orlando, Florida along with major pediatric specialty clinics in [Delaware, Florida, Pennsylvania and New Jersey](#). Established as [The Nemours Foundation](#) through the legacy and philanthropy of [Alfred I. du Pont](#), Nemours offers pediatric [clinical care](#), [research](#), [education](#), [advocacy](#) and [prevention](#) programs to all families in the communities it serves. For more information, visit www.Nemours.org.