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December 2, 2015

Ms. Jane Hanafin  
Administrative Director  
Heart Institute at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital  
848 Adams Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38103

Dear Ms. Hanafin,

I write to you on behalf of the International Children's Heart Foundation (ICHF) in support of its efforts to transfer three year old Manolito Alejandro from Cuba to Le Bonheur Children's Hospital to receive treatment for Tetralogy of Fallot. While ICHF has performed this surgery many times in children around the world and has been working with medical teams in Cuba to conduct the necessary surgery, due to limited equipment and resources in Cuba, ICHF must transfer Manolito to the United States for the procedure. In light of our recently normalized relations with Cuba, and as a supporter of medical diplomacy and access to medical care, it is my hope that with the support of the Rotary Gift of Life Mid-South, Le Bonheur – a jewel of the city of Memphis and a leader in pediatric medicine – will be able to accommodate Manolito for the life-saving surgery.

As you may know, the ICHF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) located in Memphis and works to bring medications, surgical supplies and diagnostic equipment to medical facilities in developing countries as well as provide surgical training to medical staff in those countries. Currently, Cuba does not have the complete components and resources necessary for Manolito's surgery, and while ICHF is working to equip Cuba with the needed components, resources and training, time is of the essence and having Manolito's surgery stateside is a sound decision for the prospects of his survival. The window for the surgery could be in January. As a world-renowned medical institution that has contributed to global pediatric research and surgical innovations, I am confident in Le Bonheur's ability to partner with ICHF for this procedure.

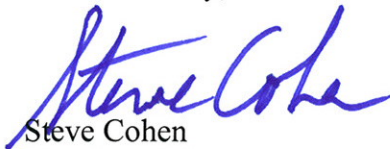
The ICHF and I share a similar vision for Memphis and Cuba to develop a lasting relationship through medical diplomacy, as Cuba has an impressive history of medical advancements that could be of benefit to the Memphis community. Just this year, Cuba received World Health Organization certification for becoming the first country to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.<sup>i</sup> Additionally, Cuba has maintained an infant mortality rate of roughly 4.2 deaths per 1,000 live births<sup>ii</sup> compared to Shelby County's rate of 9.2 deaths per

1,000 live births, which is also higher than our nation's average rate of 6.17 deaths per 1,000 live births.<sup>iii</sup> Furthermore, Cuba has made extensive advancements in diabetes research to prevent amputations and has developed a lung cancer vaccine that has been approved for U.S. clinical trials at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York.<sup>iv</sup> If Le Bonheur accepts Manolito for his surgery, this could open doors for Memphis medical institutions to partner with some of the world's best medical minds to share best medical practices and procedures, and bring treatment for childhood heart diseases, HIV, diabetes, cancer and other diseases to Memphians.

It is in the spirit of providing Manolito life-saving medical care and the opportunity to advance medical diplomacy between Memphis and Cuba for the betterment of both of our nations that I support ICHF's work to bring Manolito to Le Bonheur and hope that you will consider its request favorably.

As always I remain,

Most Sincerely,



Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

cc: Meri Armour, President and Chief Executive Officer  
Le Bonheur Children's Hospital

William Pickens, Founder  
Gift of Life Mid-South

Martin Petrussek, Chairman, Board of Directors  
Gift of Life Mid-South

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<sup>i</sup> World Health Organization, "WHO validates elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis in Cuba," June 30, 2015, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/mtct-hiv-cuba/en/> (accessed November 30, 2015).

<sup>ii</sup> W. T. Whitney, Jr., "Cuba's infant mortality rate at its lowest level ever," January 9, 2015, <http://peoplesworld.org/cuba-s-infant-mortality-rate-at-its-lowest-level-ever/> (accessed November 30, 2015).

<sup>iii</sup> Alexandra Pusateri, "Infant mortality rate down but more work needed, says Health Department," May 27, 2015, <http://www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/infant-mortality-rate-down-but-more-work-needed-says-health-department/Content?oid=3905190> (accessed November 30, 2015).

<sup>iv</sup> Marcia Frellick, "As Cuba-US relations thaw, potential medical advances grow," July 7, 2015, [http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/847571#vp\\_2](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/847571#vp_2) (accessed November 30, 2015).