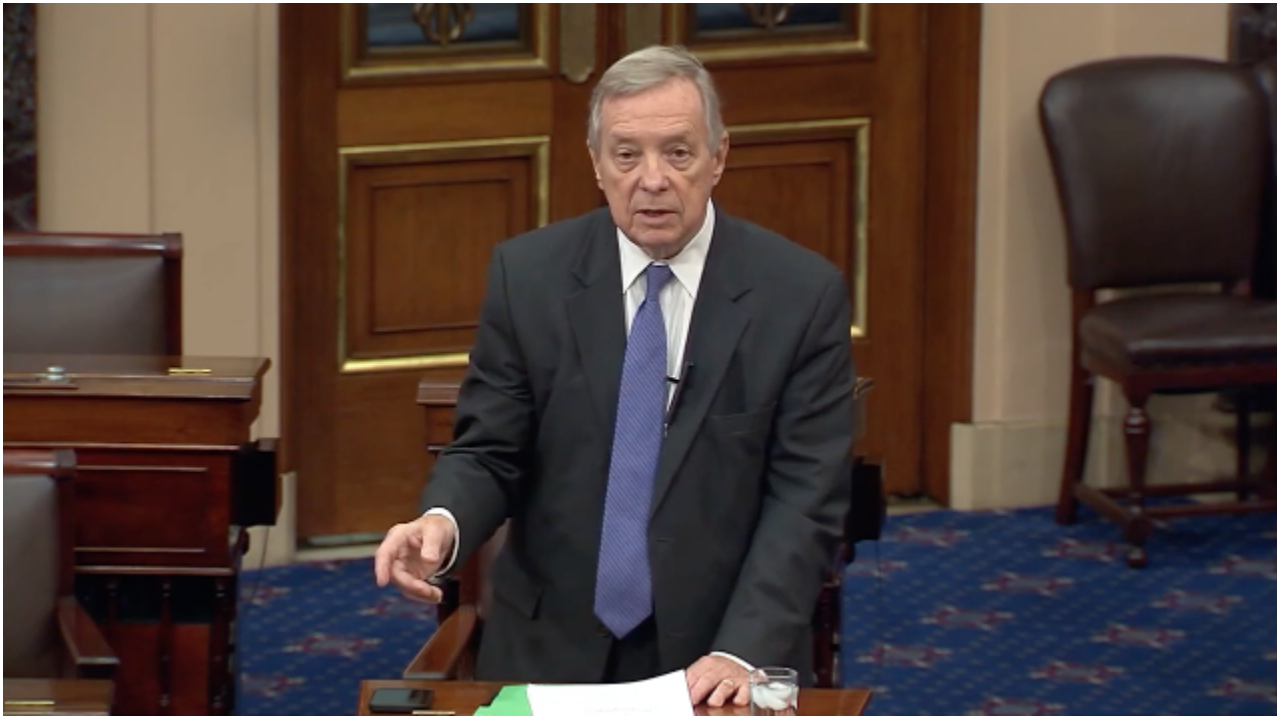


# **Durbin Highlights Strains On Families, Hospitals From Current RSV Surge**

by Maddie Carlos

November 17 2022 9:23 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) spoke on the Senate floor highlighting the dramatic new surge in Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)—a respiratory virus that can be especially serious for young children and older adults. During his speech, Durbin called on Congress to provide the resources to get us safely through this current surge, including to address the workforce shortages faced by children’s hospitals.

He also highlighted an Illinois pediatrician, who had to travel an hour to Springfield from Mount Zion, to get her sick baby the care she needed.

“As a parent, there is no more terrifying or helpless feeling than knowing that your young baby is seriously ill,” said Durbin. “I know. I lived it... If a pediatrician has to struggle to find hospital care for her own sick infant, imagine the panic and fear other parents feel when their babies are struggling to breathe because of RSV.”

“RSV isn’t just a problem in small towns,” Durbin continued. “Chicago is the third largest city in America, with some of the best hospitals in the world – including some of the finest children’s hospitals. The rate of emergency room visits for young children with RSV is now 10 times higher than in 2019. Ten times higher than a normal season three years ago.”

Across the country, children’s hospitals are being pushed to the brink, caring for infants, toddlers, and young children sickened by RSV. Earlier this month, Comer Children’s Hospital at the University of Chicago was full for 53 straight days and more than 90 percent of pediatric ICU beds across Illinois hospitals are full during this hectic time.

The Children’s Hospital Association and American Academy of Pediatrics have asked the Biden Administration to issue an emergency declaration to free up more resources.

During his speech, Durbin highlighted the need to do more to end the health care shortage and praised his colleagues Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ), John Boozman (R-AK), and Chuck Schumer (D-NY) for their bipartisan plan to increase funding for medical residency slots, to train the next generation of medical professionals. This would build upon the *American Rescue Plan*, which included a Durbin provision to invest \$1 billion in the National Health Service Corps—for scholarships and loan repayment for new nurses and doctors who serve in urban and rural areas in need.

Durbin concluded, “We’re all in this together. Hospitals are doing their best. Doctors and nurses are working extra-long shifts to keep kids safe. We all need to do our part, too. For all of us, that means staying home when we’re sick, washing our hands, and getting our COVID booster and flu shots. For those of us in Congress, it also means providing the resources to get safely through this current surge of RSV, and building the strong public health infrastructure, which American families require.”

**Video of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).**

**Audio of Durbin’s remarks on the Senate floor is available [here](#).**