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HEALTH CARE

American Academy of Pediatrics Celebrates 75 Years

NewsUSA

(NU) - In 1930, a group of 35 pediatricians who felt that an independent forum was needed to address children's health issues came together in Detroit to form the American Academy of Pediatrics. Today the organization is celebrating its 75th anniversary and boasts 60,000 members.

"The AAP has a direct impact on the future because today's children are tomorrow's leaders," said Dr. Carol Berkowitz, AAP president. "By advocating for and providing the means for children to be emotionally and physically healthy, the AAP is instrumental in ensuring that the future is bright."

Here are some of the most notable advancements the AAP has helped bring about in the past 75 years:

- Increased immunization rates and lower incidence of infectious diseases such as polio, measles, chickenpox and pneumonia;

- Increased folic acid consumption among pregnant women in order to reduce birth defects;

- More than 1 million pediatricians have been trained in the AAP's Neonatal Resuscitation Program;

- More than 350 AAP policy statements have been released, influencing debate on topics such as pediatrician reporting of child abuse (1966); breastfeeding for full-term infants (1978); counseling pregnant teenagers on various options, including abortion (1979); giving mature adoptees access to their birth records

- (1981); opposing corporal punishment in schools (1984); advertising of contraceptives to teens (1986); use of analgesia during circumcision (1999); restricting TV for children under 2 years old (2001); and eliminating soft drinks in schools (2004).

- The AAP influenced the passage of the "pediatric rule," the 1998 Food and Drug Administration regulation created to ensure drugs are properly labeled for pediatric use based on scientific studies. As a result, at least 98 studies have improved the safety of medicines for children by identifying proper dosing, safety information and possible side effects.

- In 1992, the AAP advocated laying infants on their backs instead of their stomachs when sleeping, a policy that resulted in a 50 percent reduction in the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome in the United States.

The AAP plans to continue its significant contributions to children's health for the next 75 years and beyond. Its goals include: universal health care coverage for all children; increased efforts to prevent and reduce childhood obesity; expanded education about childhood health issues for parents and pediatricians; greater understanding and research in human genetics; increased efforts to reduce prematurity; and improvements in vaccine efficacy and delivery.

For more information on the AAP and special 75th anniversary events planned throughout 2005, visit www.aap.org/75/.