



American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

## Children and Health Care Equity

It is the position of the American Academy of Pediatrics that health care reform should:

- ★ Significantly reduce or remove all disparities in access to health care.
- ★ Promote quality culturally-effective health care for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.
- ★ Fund and expand training and education programs to enhance the diversity of the health care workforce, including pediatrics.

### The Issue

The increasing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the pediatric patient population requires that pediatricians and child health professionals provide culturally effective care to reduce disparities based on race, ethnicity, language, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, and other personal attributes. If we are to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse child and adolescent population, it is crucial to increase the number of medical students from minority groups choosing pediatrics as a career, as well as increase the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of medical school faculty. To appropriately address the complexity of these issues and the health care needs of communities, ongoing education and research are also essential. The development of educational programs along with curricula to enhance the provision of culturally effective care should be incorporated in medical schools, residency programs, and continuing medical education. Research, data collection, and program evaluation to examine our progress in improving child health outcomes by race/ethnicity/cultural group must be ongoing.

### Current Status

Current policy and government mandates have attempted to address health disparities and the provision of culturally effective care; however, these efforts have been largely unfunded. If new health care policies are established to improve the provision of culturally-effective health care, they must be accompanied by funding and infrastructure necessary to implement these programs and achieve the identified outcomes. Federal and state incentive programs should be established to encourage the implementation of national, regional, and community-based programs to improve the delivery of culturally-effective health care.