



## Children Deserve High Quality Health Care

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

- ★ Strengthen child health quality improvement activities at the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- ★ Improve outcomes by gathering, analyzing and publicly reporting state-by-state data collected on child health quality measures.
- ★ Encourage development, endorsement, and updating of child-specific quality measures.
- ★ Provide HHS with the authority to grant funds to states and child health providers for demonstration program quality improvement and health IT initiatives.

### The Issue

In the October 11, 2007 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Rita Mangione Smith, MD, MPH, highlights that children receive the right level of care 46 percent of the time. Additionally, a 2008 UNICEF study reported that the United States ranks 20<sup>th</sup> of 21 developed nations surveyed for the health and well-being of children.

The Academy is committed to improving the quality of children's health care through research, education, policy analysis, and advocacy. However pediatricians must develop and implement quality and performance measurements for children to achieve meaningful improvements in care. Pediatric providers – both physicians and hospitals – are collaborating to advance quality measurement for children. Federal leadership is essential to expedite the work that is needed to bring measures through development, testing and national consensus review.

### Current Status

The federal government has made a substantial investment in pediatric quality measurement, recognizing that public coverage through Medicaid and CHIP could be an effective lever to impact children's health care quality. The Children's Health Care Quality Act was originally introduced in 2007 and was included as the quality section in the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009. The new law contains several improvements, including funding for pediatric-specific medical home demonstration projects.

In 2008, Senators Max Baucus (D-MT) and Kent Conrad (D-ND) introduced the Comparative Effectiveness Research Act of 2008 ("the Act") with the goal of establishing improved quality of care, improved efficiency, and ultimately cost savings throughout the health system. Similar language is included in the American Reinvestment and Economic Recovery Act (HR 1). While the AAP supports the Act, the AAP has expressed its concerns regarding the Comparative Effectiveness Research Institute established in the legislation – specifically its reliance on Medicare data as the means to evaluate and ultimately improve health care. In its comments, the AAP emphasized that it is imperative that the Institute include representatives from the pediatric community and address pediatric-appropriate research.