

Pediatric Workforce

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

- ★ Address and improve the uneven geographic distribution of the physician workforce, including pediatrics.
- ★ Enhance the delivery of culturally effective health care.
- ★ Include mechanisms to educate and train an appropriate supply of pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists.
- ★ Continue and expand primary care training programs, such as the Title VII health professions and education program.
- ★ Expand the National Health Service Corps to increase opportunities for pediatricians.
- ★ Fully fund the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education Payment Program.

The Issue

Meeting the health needs of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults and providing them with a medical home will require access in all rural, suburban and urban communities to a pediatrician workforce composed of: appropriate numbers of well-trained pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, and other child health professionals and specialist physicians who provide care to children and adolescents.

Current Status

Access to pediatric health care and improved health outcomes for children depends on an investment in the education and training of a strong and stable pediatrician workforce and ensuring culturally effective pediatric care. Workforce shortages exist in pediatric medical subspecialties and pediatric surgical specialties. Any initiatives to recruit into or train medical students and residents for specific disciplines or to underserved geographic regions must include the needs of children and adolescents.

Federal policies must consider the extension of student-loan deferment until the completion of residency education, and make educational loans tax deductible. In addition, federally-sponsored student loan deferment, forgiveness programs and other incentives for residents and pediatricians should be expanded to ensure a health care workforce that is adequate to meet patients' needs. These incentives should also support pediatricians pursuing academic research careers or practicing in designated underserved communities.