



Talking to Kids About the Economy: Guidance for Pediatricians

As pediatricians, we have a longstanding history of working with families and communities to ensure that children's basic needs are met. Now, more than ever, it's important for us to:

- Advocate for strategies and programs that ensure health insurance and low out-of-pocket costs for recommended health services.
- Promote the medical home at all levels and advocate for community-based child health initiatives that are family centered.
- Provide insight, guidance, and advice to help children and families cope with the pressures of day-to-day life.
- Help families identify ways to obtain advice or assistance in meeting their family's financial needs by connecting them to entitlement programs, community resources, and relevant social service agencies.
- Advise adults of the importance of meeting their own emotional needs and offer guidance on how they can talk to and support children during difficult times.

Primary care physicians, particularly those who own pediatric practices should recognize:

- There may be a decrease in patient visits, especially when deductibles are due. However, since waiting rooms tend to be overcrowded this time of year, a reduction in patients could ease the workload for physicians as well as result in a shorter waiting time for families.
- Families may not pay for their out-of-pocket costs as readily as they have in the past.
- It could be challenging to borrow money to open a new practice or expand an existing office.
- Future economic stimulus efforts may bolster Medicaid or SCHIP. This could mean more jobs or continued compensation (versus a decline or elimination of reimbursements).

Strategies for mitigating these situations include: making it as easy as possible for patients to make and keep appointments, contacting existing patients to schedule preventive or follow-up care, developing a practice website to attract new clients, and controlling operating costs whenever possible.

If pediatricians are worried about the impact of the financial crisis on their business or own family, it will be even harder for them to support families under their care. Pediatricians should follow the same advice they offer to families under their care.

Additional Resources for Pediatricians

External resources:

- Dollars and Sense: Talking to Your Children about the Economy
<http://apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=185>
- Economic Blues Trickle Down to Physicians
<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/585990>
Note: Free registration required

AAP resources:

- Tips for Parents and Caregivers
<http://www.aap.org/disasters/economy-parents.cfm>
- Practice Management Online
<http://practice.aap.org/>
- National Center for Medical Home Implementation
<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/>
- Medical Home Tools for Providers
<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/tools/providerindex.html>
- Medical Home Talking Points
[http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/Medical Home Talking Points Final Version-Word.doc](http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/Medical%20Home%20Talking%20Points%20Final%20Version-Word.doc)
- Medical Home Coding Resource
<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/tools/coding.html>
- Marketing Your Pediatric Practice
<http://practice.aap.org/content.aspx?aid=2631>

This handout was created by the American Academy of Pediatrics. For more information, see: <http://www.aap.org/disasters/economy.cfm> or e-mail DisasterReady@aap.org.