

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

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Press Statement on MEDICAID PAYMENT PARITY

By Judith S. Palfrey, MD, FAAP, president, American Academy of Pediatrics

"The American Academy of Pediatrics—a non-profit professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults—is pleased to join 117 consumer, physician and patient advocacy groups to urge Congress to bring Medicaid reimbursement rates for primary care in line with comparable Medicare rates in the final health reform legislation.

"The Academy's highest priorities in health reform continue to be coverage for all children in the United States, age-appropriate benefits in a medical home, and appropriate payment rates and workforce improvements to allow access to covered services.

"Medicaid rates average just 66 percent of Medicare rates for primary care services and are simply insufficient to cover all costs. Children lose if Congress ultimately fails to address reimbursement disparities. Pediatricians and other health care providers need to be focused on treating and caring for our children, not worried about how to pay their bills. The Academy strongly believes that appropriate payment rates are needed to provide real access to care.

"The Academy supports House provisions to establish parity between payment for primary care codes in Medicare and Medicaid. There is solid evidence that appropriate payment of providers will result in children having better access to comprehensive health services in a medical home.

"We are hopeful that as the health reform legislation evolves into a final, unified bill in the weeks ahead, our nation's lawmakers will continue to prioritize coverage, benefits in a medical home and access through appropriate payment rates for child health services. Children cannot become a casualty of compromise. We must continue to make children's health needs our nation's highest priority."

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