

# **Advocacy at Different Levels**

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## **Advocacy Among Pediatric Residents**

- Can advocate for our patients on many different levels.
- Can personally choose the level we feel most comfortable & effective at.
- Can advocate for our patients within our time limitations.
- Can help create the changes we believe are needed in the field of pediatrics.

## **Advocacy at the Individual Patient Level**

- # 1 barrier to pediatric mental health is lack of diagnosis or identification.
- Work on understanding signs of mental disorders.
- Screen patients within your own continuity clinics.
- Talk about mental health concerns or questions with part of your well child visit.
- Increase awareness at your clinics regarding suicide prevention & crisis hotlines.
- Find out the numbers of your community's help lines.
- Create posters & wallet sized cards with these or local numbers:
  - 1-800-SUICIDE (suicide prevention/crisis)
  - 1-800-273-TALK (counseling, suicide prevention, mental health referrals)

## **Advocacy at the Community Level**

- Although we may not have the time to extensively treat a mental health disorder, we can make effective community referrals.
- Learn about the resources available in your community.
- Spread the word about what is available to your fellow residents.
- Contact the community resources to build a better relationship with your clinic.
- Find out which community resource is the most comprehensive & effective by speaking with other community members & psychiatrists.
- If there are few community resources available, take action.
- Write op-ed pieces to your city/town newspapers about the need for more resources.
- Contact your mayor, city council, or school board about the need for more mental health resources from your stance as a pediatrician.

## **Advocacy at the State Level**

- Contact your local AAP chapter to find out about mental health legislation that is being discussed within your state.
- Find your AAP chapter legislative contacts by going to <http://www.aap.org/member/chapters/chapters.htm>
- Find out how you can become more involved with your AAP chapter's legislative efforts.
- Be a leader for pediatric mental health in your state!
- Find out who are your state representatives by going to [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)
- Learn more about pediatric mental health at the state level by reading the AAP Child & Mental Health Issue Brief.
- The AAP Division of State Government Affairs is available to act as a resource to you as you work with your chapters on state advocacy issues.

### **Advocacy at the Federal Level**

- Find out who your Senators and House representatives are by going to: <http://aap.grassroots.com/electedofficials/>
- Sign & send copies of the AAP Mental Health Parity letter of support found at: <http://aap.grassroots.com/mentalhealthparity/>
- Start a letter writing campaign within your residency program.

### **Be a Key Contact in FAAN**

- Key Contacts are AAP members who have agreed to take their advocacy to the next level by developing an ongoing relationship with their respective federal legislators.
- The Key Contacts program serves as a critical supplement to the work accomplished by the Federal Advocacy Action Network (FAAN) and the AAP Department of Federal Affairs.
- Key Contacts will receive more sophisticated assignments from the AAP Department of Federal Affairs than FAANs and are expected to report back their results.
- Contacts should be ready to respond to requests for action and become a resource for their federal legislators at critical decision points.
- Being a Key Contact requires a very small time commitment but can yield big results.
- To sign up go to: <http://aap.grassroots.com/keycontact/>