

# DISTRICT IX RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

Summer 2004 Issue

CALIFORNIA RESIDENT INVOLVMENT IN GOVERNMENT

## UCSF RESIDENT TESTIFIES BEFORE COMMITTEE AT THE STATE CAPITOL

By Shannon Sullivan, UCSF

As pediatric residents, we all know the frustration of caring for an asthmatic patient who may not be able to obtain essential supplies like spacers or nebulizers when most needed. Children whose families are unable to afford the out-of-pocket cost of a spacer or other equipment may be at increased risk of more frequent or more serious asthma exacerbations.

This April I learned that opportunities to advocate for children with asthma are more accessible than I thought. With the guidance of Kris Calvin, MA, AAP-California's Executive Director, I learned of AB2185-Asthma Treatment Care, sponsored by Majority Leader Dario Frommer (43<sup>rd</sup> district). This bill, which was introduced in February 2004, would require health care service plans that include outpatient prescription drug benefits to also cover spacers, nebulizers, and peak flow meters when these are medically necessary to treat asthma. It would also require health plans to include appropriate education in the use of these devices as part of broader asthma education.

I was ready to get involved. First I worked with Kris and members from the AAP State Government Affairs Committee to draft a letter of support for AB 2185 on behalf of the California-AAP, which was submitted to Majority Leader Frommer's office. Then, just days before the bill was to be heard in the Health Committee, I was asked by Frommer's office to testify before the Committee in Sacramento in favor of the bill.

As a pediatric resident representing CA-AAP, I was able to share with the Health Committee – in a few minutes – my “expert opinion” on the importance of AB 2185. Though the Health Committee considered dozens of bills that day, I was one of the only physicians – and the only pediatrician – to testify on any bill. It was an energizing experience – and we were rewarded when the bill passed out of Committee and ultimately into the Senate, where it underwent further scrutiny.

You can follow the progress of this bill and others at [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov) – try it! As pediatricians, our opinions and experience do count in Sacramento, so get started today!



## CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE DAY

Pediatricians from around the state descended upon the state capitol on April 28<sup>th</sup> for the California AAP Legislative Advocacy Day, held in conjunction with the California Medical Association Legislative Day. Several pediatric residents from all areas of California joined in the advocacy training sessions led by Executive Director Kris Calvin and our AAP lobbyist. Armed with information and enthusiasm, many residents joined other pediatricians in visiting their state legislator and lobbying for children's needs.



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN SAN FRANCISCO

Don't miss the upcoming NCE **October 9-13<sup>th</sup>** which will take place in California's beautiful city of San Francisco! The focus of the NCE this year is mental health and obesity. To add to the excitement, the keynote address will be given by former First Lady Rosalynn Carter and will focus on international child health and mental health issues. The Section on Residents this year is entitled "**Leadership and Legislative Advocacy**" and will provide hands on information on how to advocate for children's issues on a state and national level. The session is on October 9<sup>th</sup> from 7:30am to 3:30pm and is free for all residents. See you in San Francisco!

For more information:  
<http://www.aap.org/2004nce>

## COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS MEETING

By Michelle H. Lewis, M.D., J.D., UCLA  
On February 8-9, 2004, I had the opportunity to attend the meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Academy) Committee on Federal Government Affairs (COFGA) as the Liaison from the Resident Section of the Academy. The meeting was attended by committee members and liaisons from several different organizations that share common

interests with the Academy, such as the Society for Adolescent Medicine and the National Association of Children's Hospitals and staff members from the Academy Washington office. The main themes of the meeting were the upcoming presidential election and Medicaid reform.

The Academy's election priority list for the coming year was a major focus of the meeting. Earlier in the year, Academy President Carden Johnson sent a letter to Academy Chapter Presidents in certain states with key presidential primaries to encourage participation in campaign events. Chapter Presidents were asked to attend events and question candidates about children's health care issues, particularly the candidates' plans to secure health insurance for every child. The goal was not to endorse any candidate on behalf of the Academy but rather to raise awareness about children's issues. Academy leaders will continue to work with the campaign staff of both parties to discuss children's health issues. A 2004 Election Resource packet has been developed to assist these efforts. This packet is available on the Members Center section of the Academy website.

The COFGA members encouraged residents to participate in these activities as well, although the committee recognized the time constraints placed on residents' schedules. The committee members overwhelmingly agreed that the single most important thing that residents can do on an individual basis to advocate for children during the presidential campaign is to register to vote. AAP members can register on-line through the Members Center section of the Academy website. Once in the Members Center, click on "Federal Affairs," then "Elections & Campaigns," and then enter the state in which you live for further instructions.

The Federal Advocacy Action Network (FAAN) is an additional resource to advise Academy members about legislative issues. The network has now been expanded to include all Academy members with an e-mail address. The network played a significant role in the passage of the Pediatric Rule. The Academy's Key Contact program, in which a pediatrician in each Congressional district is identified to work

closely with their member of Congress, continues to grow.

One of the highlights of the meeting was our visit to Capitol Hill. On the Senate side, we met with staff members of Senators on the GOP Uninsured Task Force to discuss the Academy's concerns about Association Health Plans. On the House side, we met with staff members of Congressmen on the House GOP Medicaid Task Force to advocate for greater access to health care for children and to discuss the likelihood of Medicaid reform during this Congressional session. Most staff members agreed that Medicaid reform was unlikely during an election year.

The key issues for this year for COFGA include the presidential election, the FY 2004 Budget, continued efforts to improve access to health care for children and their families, and concerns about possible reduction or restructuring of Medicaid and SCHIP funding. The committee members were enthusiastic about my participation as the Resident Liaison, and they encouraged pediatric residents to get involved in advocacy efforts. Please remember to register to vote--your vote counts, and you truly can make a difference for children!

## VALUABLE WEBSITE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT A BILL IN THE CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENTAL PROCESS:  
[www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov)

RESIDENT AAP WEBSITE:  
<http://www.aap.org/sections/resident/>

NCE IN SAN FRANCISCO 2004:  
<http://www.aap.org/2004nce>

INFORMATION ON FELLOWSHIPS:  
<http://www.aap.org/sections/resident/findaflship.htm>

CATCH:  
<http://www.aap.org/catch/>

FUNDING RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS:  
<http://www.aap.org/commpeps/funding.html>

## LOCAL CHAPTERS ASKING FOR RESIDENT INPUT

Contact your local chapter to find out how you can become more involved in advocacy and chapter events:

Chapter 1:  
<http://www.aapca1.org/>  
Chapter 2:  
<http://www.aapca2.org/>  
Chapter 3:  
<http://www.aapca3.org/>  
Chapter 4:  
<http://www.aapca4.org/>

## BECOME INVOLVED IN LEADERSHIP IN THE AAP!!!

Are you interested in helping residents within the state become more involved in child advocacy? Become a leader in the AAP! As an officer on the state or national level you will have the opportunity to travel to meetings to organize and implement activities for residents within the AAP. There are also exciting opportunities to serve as a liaison to various sections within the AAP where you can be the pediatric resident representative for the United States. The opportunities are endless. Visit the website below to learn more about various positions available:  
<http://www.aap.org/sections/resident/leadpositions.htm>

Elections will be held at the NCE. Feel free to contact your current Assistant District Coordinator with any questions you may have at: [ariamedicine@hotmail.com](mailto:ariamedicine@hotmail.com)

**Do you want to contribute to the resident district newsletter?** Contact Laura Hufford, newsletter editor/assistant district coordinator from UC Davis by email at: [ariamedicine@hotmail.com](mailto:ariamedicine@hotmail.com)