



# DISTRICT IX RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

## Summer 2005 Issue

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### Out of the Hospital, Into the Capitol

*By Matt Oster, MD*

It all started quite simply. Go to Sacramento for a day, receive some training in lobbying from the AAP-CA executive director, and join other pediatricians to visit a representative on an important legislative bill. I went mostly for just the educational experience for myself. Little did I know that it would turn into an opportunity for me to educate the public at large.

As a newcomer to the California political scene, I was excited to join other pediatricians (including other residents!) in our state at an organized lobby day in Sacramento. On that lovely April day I familiarized myself with the layout of the capitol district of Sacramento, learned effective tools for lobbying legislators, and felt the pulse of political activities in California, especially as they relate to children. The highlight of the day, however, was meeting with my local representative, Leland Yee. Assemblyman Yee had introduced a bill that the AAP-CA had placed high on its list of legislative priorities for the year – AB 450. This bill would ban the sale of extremely violent video games to minors. As supporters of this bill, we met with Assemblyman Yee to offer our help in pushing this bill forward. Two weeks later, they took us up on our offer.

To help call attention to the importance of this issue, Assemblyman Yee's office organized a

press conference in conjunction with a judiciary hearing on the bill. They wanted to show the press and thus the public that this bill was about more than just eliminating bad influences on our children; it was about protecting their health. Enter the pediatrician. Donning my white coat and flanked by lawyers, psychiatrists, parents, and about forty girl scouts, I emphasized the overwhelming evidence that playing violent video games results in increased violent activity in our children. By all measures the press conference was a success: the press portrayed the bill as an important public health measure, the bill moved forward in the assembly, and my mother was thrilled to see her son on television.

What started as just a passive experience in learning about advocacy turned into an opportunity to play an active role in shaping the health of the



children of California. That's how advocacy often works; you never know when a chance to become an advocate for children will arise. Just getting your foot in the door can open up a world of opportunities to make a difference.

*Dr. Matt Oster is a pediatrics resident at UCSF and is the Assistant District Coordinator for the Resident Section for District IX (California).*

## A DAY IN THE LIFE: KRIS CALVIN



As the American Academy of Pediatrics, California District (AAP-CA) IX Director, Sacramento is my home away from home. I trek up there from Southern California roughly twice

a month. It was originally a gold rush town. About a year after a fort was established in the Sacramento area in 1839, gold was discovered. Although the current Sacramento city motto is broadly stated as “the city of choice in which to live, learn, work, and play”, as far as I can tell, it’s still a single-purpose town. All the living, learning, working and playing really are there to serve us prospectors in our search for political “gold”.

A typical day for me in Sacramento starts and ends with coalition work. The AAP-CA selects 3-5 top priority state government affairs issues each year. This year these are protecting children’s programs in the state budget, including CHDP and CCS; expanding children’s health insurance access through AB 772 and SB 437; establishing a state immunization registry through AB 576; and prohibiting the sale of violent video games to minors through AB 450. In addition to those priority issues, we work on literally hundreds of other bills. Many of these are critically important (reform of the foster care system; streamlining Medi-Cal eligibility; private sector payment issues, etc.) But with only myself, Marianne managing the District office in Albany, and a part-time lobbyist, we can not cover them all. So coalitions are necessary. Further, the voice of many advocates, joined through a coalition, are powerful when so many single voices are striving to be heard. Groups we work with include The Children’s Roundtable; Covering California’s Kids, a CMA-led coalition on Medi-Cal issues; and the California Coalition for Childhood Immunizations. These coalition meetings are often lengthy—4-6 hours—so that we can develop shared agendas and implementation strategies. But they are worthwhile, not only in the end-product of action, but also in what I learn from the perspectives of patient and consumer groups, health plans and others.

In addition to coalition meetings, I generally spend time in direct education of legislators, top administrative policymakers and their staff. This may include meetings in their offices to develop legislation or discuss current bills, as well as attending hearings to present testimony on issues before committee. Contrary to what I believe is a popular misconception, most Sacramento politicians and policymakers mean well. They are there because they want to enact positive change. Now their image of change, and political philosophy, may differ from yours, but they still want something good in the end. So I take that perspective with me into any meeting on any issue, and try to work positively and respectfully with “all sides”.

**My favorite days in Sacramento are those when I get to work with residents.** Dubbed “AAP-CA Shadow days”, on these days 2-5 residents to join me in my activities there, learning by doing in meetings and hearings. This is generally accompanied by an hour focused training on political advocacy in pediatrics, that we do over lunch or dinner.

The AAP-CA has had great success in recent years in achieving our goals, including preventing physician reimbursement cuts under Medi-Cal, protecting critical programs like Healthy Families and CCS from waiting lists, adding bike helmets on scooters and booster seats in cars to critically-needed injury prevention requirements, prohibiting soda sales in schools, and so on. I believe this stems in large part from the credibility we have established by being there on so many important children’s issues, speaking from the evidence, and working collaboratively and positively. It could not be done without the countless pediatrician volunteers, including residents, who join me in this effort. If you would like to learn more, or sign up for a Shadow Day, please contact me at [AAPCALIFORNIA@aol.com](mailto:AAPCALIFORNIA@aol.com).

Politics determine policy, which guides the future of California’s children and the practice of pediatrics. I hope you will venture forth to help me uncover a little political “gold” along the way, measured in good outcomes for the children we serve.

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION IN WASHINGTON, DC

It's that time of year again...time to start planning to attend the annual AAP National Conference and Exhibition! From **October 8-11, 2005**, pediatricians from around the country and even the world will convene in Washington, DC, for 4 days of educational sessions, social events, keynote speakers, and the exhibit hall. In addition to the usual outstanding line-up of events and sessions, this year's NCE will include a special focus on children's mental health.



If you haven't been to an NCE before, now's the time to go! The most important day for residents is Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, as the residents will be meeting as a section and have special sessions geared specifically for residents, including:

- Keynote Address: "Pediatrician as Leaders: Making a Difference in Our Communities" *Lewis First, MD*
- Child Advocacy Award Presentation
- District Meetings and Elections
- Resident Resolutions
- Leadership Workshop
- Community Advocacy Workshop

## CHAPTER FOCUS

*Each newsletter will focus on a specific program from one chapter. This issue looks at Chapter 3.*

Chapter 3 has had active resident representation to its advisory board by both programs in San Diego, UCSD and the Navy. They even have resident representation on some of our committees (School Health, Infectious Disease and International Health, most notably). They give monthly awards to residents for outstanding work or diagnoses, at the discretion of their chiefs, including money for books, and they have sent residents to attend Shadow Day in Sacramento with Kris Calvin. Look for an expansion of their Life After Residency program in September!

## CALIFORNIA ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT

*Each newsletter will highlight one statewide advocacy group in California.*

### Prevention Institute

Prevention Institute is a non-profit national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development.



[www.preventioninstitute.org](http://www.preventioninstitute.org)

## RESOURCES

Resident AAP Website

[www.aap.org/sections/resident](http://www.aap.org/sections/resident)

District IX Resident Website

[www.aap.org/sections/resident/districtix.htm](http://www.aap.org/sections/resident/districtix.htm)

District IX Chapter Websites

Chapter 1 (Northern CA):

[www.aapca1.org](http://www.aapca1.org)

Chapter 2 (Southern CA, except as listed in Ch. 3 & 4)

[www.aapca2.org](http://www.aapca2.org)

Chapter 3 (San Diego):

[www.aapca3.org](http://www.aapca3.org)

Chapter 4 (Orange Country):

[www.aapca4.org](http://www.aapca4.org)



## UPCOMING EVENTS IN CALIFORNIA

*Minding Your Pediatric Business*

July 23, 2005

Los Angeles

(213) 250-4876



*Sugar and Spice, No Longer Nice: The New Wave of Violence*

September 20, 2005

Orange County

714/971-0695

## AAP E-MAIL FOR LIFE!

Sick of having to update your friends and family with your new e-mail address every couple of years? Then get a free, simple, easy-to-remember e-mail address for life from the AAP! With your @aap.net e-mail address, any e-mails sent to that address will automatically be forwarded to your current e-mail account. Change your regular e-mail address? Just update your @aap.net account, and your e-mails from your friends and family will still find their way to you. For more information on setting up your @aap.net account, please visit [www.aap.org/moc/aapnet/index.cfm](http://www.aap.org/moc/aapnet/index.cfm). You will need your member ID (printed on your Pediatrics journal mailing label) in order to access the portion of the Members Only Channel.

## UPCOMING GRANT & AWARD DEADLINES

### CATCH Grants

The Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) Resident Funds program supports pediatric residents in the planning of community-based child health initiatives.

*Value:* Up to \$3000

*Deadline:* July 29, 2005

### Resident Section Anne E. Dyson Child Advocacy Award

**\$300** award to a resident run project(s) to improve the lives of children. Winners receive a \$300 check usable to toward the project, along with travel and lodging expenses for two residents to attend the AAP National Conference and Exposition (NCE) and receive the Advocacy Award plaque during the Resident Section assembly meeting.

*Value:* \$300 + trip for 2 to 2005 NCE

*Deadline:* August 5, 2005

### Resident Travel Grant to the 2005 NCE

Ask your program director about AAP travel grants to travel to the 2005 NCE. One travel grant available per program.

### International Rotation Travel Grant

Awarded to resident members who wish to complete a clinical pediatric elective in the developing world during their residency.

*Value:* \$500

*Deadline:* November 25

*For more info on grants and awards, please visit:*

[www.aap.org/sections/resident/summary-ga.htm](http://www.aap.org/sections/resident/summary-ga.htm)

**Please remember  
to tell your new  
interns to join the  
AAP!**