I care for kids and I VOTE!

AAP Section on Medical Students, Residents and Fellowship Trainees Advocacy Campaign

WHILE ELECTION DAY MAY FEEL FAR AWAY, THERE ARE IMPORTANT STEPS TO TAKE NOW:

1. **Register to vote**
   The rules vary by state, but you may need to register 1 to 1.5 months in advance, so take a moment a do it now. To find out how to register to vote in your state or to print a registration form, go to [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org)

2. **Hold a voter registration drive**
   Print voter registration forms and make them available after morning report, in your clinic, or in the lobby of your hospital. Check the rules for your state on who is eligible to vote, and provide a link to the website or a handout for people trying to register in other states directing them to the vote411.org website to get more information.

3. **Already registered?**

   For more information, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org.

4. **Check out the new Federal Affairs Get Out The Vote (GOTV) site - [http://aapgotv.org/](http://aapgotv.org/)**
   You can download AAP Charlie, the Child Health Advocate, and take pictures of him around your neighborhood, practice, state capital, or doing other GOTV activities. E-mail your pictures to the AAP Department of Federal Affairs at kids1st@aap.org, and they will be used online and in social media to help raise awareness on the importance of the pediatric voice at the ballot box. On Twitter, use #AAPCharlie to share photos of AAP Charlie in Action!
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

ACA Information and Update:
March 23, 2012 marked the second anniversary of the passing of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). Since its passage, insurance market reforms benefiting children and pediatricians have been implemented:

- coverage for children with pre-existing conditions
- no more lifetime coverage limits
- restrictions on annual coverage limits
- essential preventive care services (as recommended by Bright Futures) are provided with no cost-sharing for families with new health insurance plans
- insurance companies are prevented from dropping coverage when a child or adult gets sick
- young adults can stay on their parents’ health insurance plan until they turn 26
- out-of-pocket expenses are capped at $5,950/individual and $11,900/family
- parents can designate a pediatrician as their child’s primary care provider

The recent Supreme Court Case reviewing the constitutionality of the law has captured national attention. While some of the core aspects (anti-injunction, severability, and Medicaid expansion) of the bill are being discussed, the issue most often talked about is the law’s individual mandate requirement—the part of the bill that would require all US citizens to have health insurance by 2014 or pay a penalty. Although the public will not know the final decision until June 2012, it is thought that the justices have already decided on the case on Friday (March 30, 2012) following the hearings. While the ultimate fate of the bill is unknown, states have been making preparations since the passage of the bill given that certain provisions have already been implemented (above). The AAP has also strongly supported the law’s pediatric provisions and worked to continue improving the law through its ongoing implementation, providing eight court briefs throughout the litigation process in support of various provisions of the law. Whatever the Court decides, the Academy will remain resolute in its efforts to ensure equal access to health care services, comprehensive benefits and affordable coverage for all children. The Academy also issued a press statement and participated in a press conference on the steps of the Supreme Court during oral arguments, photos from which can be viewed on the AAP Department of Federal Affairs’ Facebook page: www.facebook.com/AAPFederalAffairs.

For more information and resources on state implementation of the ACA, visit the AAP Division of State Government Affairs site at www.aap.org/en-us/my-aap/advocacy/state-government-affairs/Pages/Affordable-Care-Act-State-Implementation.aspx (AAP Member login required).

For more information on the Supreme Court’s consideration of the Affordable Care Act and what it might mean for children and pediatricians, please read this AAP News article or view an archived webinar presentation with AAP President Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP, and Jane Perkins, the Legal Director of the National Health Law Program.

The federal budget has been a perennial topic of discussion. You may recall the testy exchanges over the debt ceiling and, more recently, calls for wealth equality. The latest chapter in the budget saga
has been a bill introduced by Congressman Ryan (R-Wisc.) who is also the Chair of the House Budget Committee. The aspect of this bill most pertinent to pediatricians is a proposition to change Medicaid funding into block grants. The end result is that cash-strapped states would be saddled with even more financial responsibility to provide funding for Medicaid coverage as the number of enrollees continues to climb. Approximately half of all children in this country are covered with Medicaid. Such budgetary modifications would reduce the ability of children to access needed medical insurance. A group of pediatricians recently advocated on Capitol Hill in support of fully funding Medicaid in its current form. The Academy issued a press statement in opposition to Chairman Ryan’s budget proposal, and SOMSRFT members can log in to http://federaladvocacy.aap.org to e-mail your federal legislators directly and urge Congress to put children first in federal spending.


If you are unable to attend a future AAP advocacy training session on May 11, 2012 in Washington, DC, (e-mail Jamie Poslosky in the AAP Department of Federal Affairs for details at jposlosky@aap.org), you can always visit the AAP SOMSRFT advocacy website and connect with your AAP Chapter to learn how you can get involved locally.

At the end of the day, all change is local anyway. If you don't have time to do either, I implore you to vote in this year's primary and general elections. A number of jurisdictions offer early voting to make the experience more convenient. Go to www.vote411.org for more information.

**REMINDER – Primary Election Dates:**

Thank you all for your help up to this point with the Advocacy Campaign. We are off to a great start! This month we are focusing on educating AAP members about State and Federal Primary election dates. As you all know, many important decisions which affect our patients, including mandatory health insurance, are determined at the state level. We would like each of you to look at the following links to determine which dates correspond to your state so that you can email the information to your program members and encourage them to vote.

- **2012 Presidential Primary-Caucus Calendar**
- **2012 State Election Calendar**

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