EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PERIODIC SURVEY OF FELLOWS #81 – PEDIATRICIANS’ LIFE AND CAREER EXPERIENCES

The Periodic Survey #81 was initiated to complement the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study (PLACES). The survey addressed five areas: characteristics of current work position, career satisfaction, personal health, work-life balance, and practice characteristics.

The survey was an eight-page self-administered questionnaire sent to 1,616 nonretired U.S. members of the AAP, March to September 2012; response to the survey was 63% (n=1010, including pediatric residents). Analyses were based on 863 post-trainee pediatricians employed full- or part-time; selected questions were further limited to those who provide direct patient care (n=820).

Current Position:

Work environment:
- Pediatricians report working an average of 45 hours per week; 79% of that time is in patient care (including teaching, visit prep and patient-related record keeping).
- Nearly one-third of pediatricians work in a pediatric group practice and 15% work in a multispecialty group practice, 13% are in a solo or 2-physician practice and 3% work in a managed care organization; 17% are in a medical school/university and 16% work in a hospital or clinic. Sixty-four percent of pediatricians say they are an employee, and 13% identify themselves as a “hospitalist.” Forty percent of pediatricians work in the suburbs and 10% are in rural areas.
- 58% of pediatricians say they personally care for patients during evening hours (after 6 p.m.), working an average of 6 nights per month. 72% report having weekend hours, working an average of 3 weekend days per month. Pediatricians report being on call an average of 9 days per month.
- More than half of pediatricians report having a nurse (56%) or nurse practitioner (52%) at their primary patient care setting who share responsibility for managing patient care; 41% report having a medical assistant and 33% report having a social worker to share care.
- About one-third (35%) say they currently use email, text or other digital technology to communicate with their patients/patients’ families.
- 59% of pediatricians say they have adequate time to spend with their patients during the typical office/patient visits.

Patient Population:
- Pediatricians report seeing an average of 76 patients per week. About 24% of their patients have special health care needs and 17% have limited English proficiency.
- Nearly half of their patients (48%) are covered by private health insurance, 42% by public health insurance, 5% military insurance, and 5% are uninsured. Pediatricians estimate that 55% of their patients are less than 5 years of age. Patient ethnicity is estimated at 50% White, non-Hispanic followed by 21% Hispanic and 19% Black.
Executive Summary - PS81-PLACES
Page 2

Satisfaction and Career Choice:

- Seven out of ten pediatricians say they are “completely” or “very” satisfied with their life as a whole. If they were to choose over again, 76% say they would become a physician and 75% would choose their current specialty. 86% say that, overall, they are pleased with their current primary job.
- While nearly one-half of pediatricians (46%) say they have previously experienced burnout in their work, only 22% say they are currently experiencing burnout.

Personal Health:

- 72% of pediatricians report their health as “very good” or “excellent.” Eight out of ten have a primary care physician that they see for checkups or when sick.
- On average, pediatricians report exercising vigorously for 33 minutes per session about 2.5 times per week, and get about 7 hours of sleep per day.

Work-Life Balance:

- About one-half of pediatricians (54%) think they currently work a comfortable amount of time; however 44% feel they work too much.
- 51% of pediatricians say they feel “moderately” or “very” stressed at work; fewer (22%) feel stressed at home. Nearly half (46%) say they are at least “moderately” stressed in their efforts to balance work and personal responsibilities.
- If applicable, 50% of pediatricians are satisfied with the amount of time they have to spend with their spouse, partner or significant other, and 43% are satisfied with the amount of time they have to spend with their children. Fewer (about one-third each) are satisfied with the amount of time they have to spend with friends, pursuing personal interests/hobbies, and in community activities.
- Most pediatricians say their family and colleagues support their efforts to balance personal and work responsibilities (87%, 65%, respectively); however, only 53% say their schedule allows them the flexibility they need to lead a balanced lifestyle and 41% say their professional responsibilities interfere with their personal responsibilities.

Pediatrician Characteristics:

- 87% of respondents are married, in a civil union, or live with a partner, and 54% have children under age 19 years living at home.
- 76% say their spouse/partner is employed; among those pediatricians, 39% say their spouse/partner is in the medical profession (pediatrician, physician, nurse).