May 1, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

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**AAP Highlights 7 Great Achievements in Pediatric Research with New Campaign**

Last weekend at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) meeting in San Diego, the Academy announced a new campaign to celebrate the successes in pediatric research. The campaign, *7 Great Achievements in Pediatric Research*, highlights *seven key discoveries over the past 40 years that have saved millions of children’s lives worldwide*, from groundbreaking treatments for deadly chronic diseases to life-saving interventions for babies who are born premature.

In order to help educate the public and members of Congress about the importance of sustained investment in pediatric research, the AAP also unveiled a [*new video*](#) from the podium at PAS, which outlines each of the following achievements and spotlights real-life success stories:

1. Preventing disease with life-saving immunizations
2. Reducing SIDS with "Back-to-Sleep"
3. Curing a common childhood cancer
4. Saving premature babies by helping them breathe
5. Preventing mother-to-baby HIV transmission
6. Increasing life expectancy for children with chronic disease
7. Saving lives with car seats and seat belts
Following the announcement, all of these achievements were featured by CBS News.

Join the effort by sharing the importance of pediatric research to children’s health with your federal legislators: Visit federaladvocacy.aap.org and click on the following links in the Advocacy Action Center:

- **Support Funding for the Next Great Achievements in Pediatric Research:** Share your own compelling stories about the successes of pediatric research with policymakers, and urge for sustained funding for pediatric research.
- **Get a Grant, Send Your Thanks:** Highlight the importance of pediatric research with a thank you note to your members of Congress each time you are awarded a federal grant.

For more information and a brochure on the 7 Great Achievements in Pediatric Research, please visit AAP.org/7Achievements.

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

You can also help spread the word about the importance of pediatric research on social media. Find your member of Congress on Twitter and consider posting the following messages:

- `[insert your senator or representative’s handle here]`, #Research4Kids matters: 7 great achievements over the past 40 years [https://aap.org/7achievements](https://aap.org/7achievements) Please support!
- `[insert your senator or representative’s handle here]` 7 reasons to support pediatric research: [https://aap.org/7achievements](https://aap.org/7achievements) #Research4Kids saves lives!
- Pediatric research keeps kids healthy & saves lives! 7 great achievements of the past 40 years [https://aap.org/7achievements](https://aap.org/7achievements) #Research4Kids

**AAP Signs Letter to President Urging FDA Tobacco Regulation**

On Tuesday, the AAP, along with 30 other public health organizations, sent a letter to President Barack Obama urging that the administration speed up the publication of a final rule to give the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, cigars, and other new tobacco products.

The letter was sent after the one-year anniversary of the publication of the proposed rule following new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicating that youth use of e-cigarettes tripled between 2013 and 2014, and youth use of cigars nearly doubled during that period. The AAP submitted comments to the FDA on the proposed rule on Aug. 4, 2014.

**House Releases Second 21st Century Cures Draft, Holds Hearing**

On Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee released its second draft of the 21st Century Cures Initiative legislation, which aims to accelerate the
The development of new medical innovations. The second draft of the legislation was half the length of the original draft released in January, and removed several provisions, including controversial patent exclusivity extensions for the drug industry. In addition to modifications to the development processes for drugs and medical devices, the draft legislation would also provide a significant boost to National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding, including a $10 billion increase in mandatory funding over the next five years for the NIH Innovation Fund and an annual $1.5 billion per year increase in NIH discretionary spending for the next three years.

The release of the second draft came just one day before the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing on the 21st Century Cures Initiative. Witnesses included Kathy Hudson, PhD, NIH deputy director for science, outreach and policy, Janet Woodcock, MD, director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research at the FDA, and Jeffrey Shuren, MD, JD, director of the Center for Devices and Radiological Health at the FDA. The committee is expected to release the next version of the legislation later this summer.

New Resource! Medicaid State Fact Sheets

The AAP, in partnership with the Children’s Hospital Association, has created fact sheets for all 50 states and the District of Columbia that explain the importance of the Medicaid program for children. The new fact sheets can be found [here](#).

Spread the news on social media

Share the new resource on Twitter to help emphasize the importance of Medicaid in your state:

#MedicaidMatters4Kids {insert # of children on Medicaid} kids in {insert state}. Congress, keep Medicaid strong in {insert state}! {insert link to state fact sheet}

Budget and Appropriations Update

On Wednesday, the budget conference committee signed off on their final budget (S. Con. Res. 11). The budget, which was negotiated by a selection of legislators from both the House and Senate, locks the sequestered discretionary caps in place and doubles the impact of sequester cuts over the next decade. Starting in 2016, non-defense discretionary spending would be cut by an average of $37 billion per year, on top of the Budget Control Act’s spending caps.

The conferenced budget was passed by the House on Thursday in a 226-197 vote and is expected to be taken up in the Senate in the coming weeks. Though the budget does not need to be signed by the president and therefore does not become law, it informs spending decisions made in the House and Senate as they appropriate funds, as well as outlines Congress’ priorities for spending purposes.

On Thursday, the House passed the Military Construction and Veteran’s Affairs appropriations bill (H.R. 2029) in a 255-163 vote, and this morning, the House passed the Energy and Water bill (H.R. 2028) in a 240-177 vote. Additionally, the House Committee on Appropriations passed the Transportation-Housing and Urban Development as well as the Legislative Branch bill. These spending bills will now
be considered by the full House. The Senate has not yet taken up any appropriations legislation, but some Senate Democrats have gone on the record stating that they will not support appropriations bills that adhere to the sequestered caps. President Obama has also stated that he will veto any appropriations bills that fall below the cap amounts.

AAP Department of Federal Affairs staff have been meeting with legislative staff to encourage them to raise the caps and provide appropriate funding for children’s health programs.

**National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters Addresses Infectious Disease Outbreaks**

The National Advisory Committee on Children and Disasters (NACCD), chaired by Michael Anderson, MD, FAAP, met this week to discuss their first task: a review of pediatric surge capacity during infectious disease outbreaks. The NACCD was established in 2014 to provide expert advice and consultation to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) on the medical and public health needs of children in regards to preparedness, emergencies and disasters.

A committee work group drafted a report titled, “Near-Term Strategies to Improve Pediatric Surge Capacity during Infectious Disease Outbreaks,” which was approved by the committee in Thursday’s meeting. In the report, the NACCD found that the lack of data and complete national pediatric surge protocols makes it difficult to fully analyze the United States’ current preparedness to respond to an infectious disease outbreak with many ill children. The committee urged ASPR to convene stakeholders to examine readiness, gaps and barriers confronted by systems affected by infectious disease outbreaks as well as lessons learned from previous outbreaks. The NACCD also called for a nationwide system to monitor pediatric surge readiness as well as the development of a repository for strategies, programs, templates, surveys, and reports that can be accessed by local communities.

**House Armed Services Committee Advances 2016 NDAA**

On Wednesday, after an eighteen and a half hour mark-up, the House Armed Services Committee voted 60-2 to advance the *2016 National Defense Authorization Act* (H.R. 1735), which would authorize $515 billion in national defense funding. The bill contains a proposal to pilot a preferred retail pharmacy network for TRICARE beneficiaries, which would run from May 1, 2016, to September 30, 2018. The bill also establishes a unified medical command and would require a report from the Secretary of Defense before the Department of Defense could realign/restructure/close a military treatment facility.

The bill will now be taken up by the full House, where it is expected that numerous amendments will be considered. AAP staff have been meeting with Armed Services Committee members to urge them to consider reforms to TRICARE that would greatly benefit children in the program, particularly those with special healthcare needs.

**Save the Date: 2016 AAP Legislative Conference**
Mark your calendars—it’s never too early to start planning for the next AAP Legislative Conference! The 25th AAP Legislative Conference will take place April 3-5, 2016, in Washington, DC. Join us next spring to learn more about how to become a strong advocate for children’s health. For more information, please visit aap.org/legcon.

What We’re Reading

- A Wall Street Journal article, “Many hospital ERs aren’t ready to treat children”
- The May AAP News Washington Report column, “AAP keeps a steady drumbeat on child nutrition advocacy”
- An AAP News article on the AAP Committee on Pediatric Research’s congressional briefing

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

Research investments
Improve health, reduce disease,
Warrant more support

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
April 24, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:
- AAP Joins Nation’s Leaders to Celebrate Passage of Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act
- Appropriations Update
- White House Launches Effort to Address Rural Childhood Poverty
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- Advocate of the Week Spotlight
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- What We’re Reading & Watching
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

**AAP Joins Nation’s Leaders to Celebrate Passage of Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act**

On Tuesday, President Barack Obama hosted a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden to celebrate last week’s passage of the *Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act* (MACRA), which will extend the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), renew the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), and repeal Medicare’s Sustainable Growth Rate formula (SGR). During the event, the Academy joined leaders from Congress, the Administration and other leading health organizations to commend the bill’s signature into law. In his address to attendees, President Obama thanked Congress for coming to an agreement and passing the legislation with strong bipartisan support.

*Pictured left to right: AAP Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Errol Alden, MD, FAAP, speaks with Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner (R-Ohio).*

**Appropriations Update**

This week, the House Committee on Appropriations unanimously passed two appropriations spending bills by voice vote: Military Construction and Veteran’s Affairs, and Energy and Water. The committee then adopted 302(b) allocations for each spending bill, which are the top line numbers that each of the 12 appropriations bills will receive in total discretionary spending. The Labor-Health
and Human Services-Education bill will receive $153.05 billion, a cut of $3.7 billion from Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.

On Monday, the AAP joined 670 other organizations in sending a letter to House appropriators, urging them to use a $163.6 billion funding level for the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. From the committee’s action, it is clear that unless a deal to raise the budget caps is made later this year, House appropriators will have to make difficult choices when deciding which programs to fund in the Labor-HHS-Education bill. The Senate has not yet released their bill or 302(b) allocations, but is expected to in the coming weeks.

**White House Launches Effort to Address Rural Childhood Poverty**

The White House Rural Council has made poverty and child health a strategic priority, launching a new effort titled *Rural Impact* to address the challenge of rural child poverty by bringing together federal agencies and public and private resources. *Rural Impact* takes a multi-generational approach to how public and private resources are invested in rural families and communities. With support from the president, cabinet officials, universities, foundations, non-profits and community groups, *Rural Impact* will focus on three major areas:

- **Innovation**: Developing new approaches of program delivery, including integrated services and remote health and learning technology, to address rural challenges and barriers;
- **Awareness**: Enhancing public awareness of rural child poverty and its impact on the future of rural communities and our nation’s global competitiveness; and
- **Investment**: Improving access to high-quality child care, early learning, and continuing education, and making work pay.

The AAP has been in contact with the White House regarding the new initiative, and is examining opportunities to partner on childhood poverty.

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

Congress currently is considering sizable cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the FY 2016 budget process. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently released a resource that lists SNAP participation data by Congressional district, including what percentage of recipients are children. This week, encourage your members of Congress to protect SNAP and keep the program strong for children. Find your member of Congress on Twitter.

- [insert your senator or representative’s handle here], please protect SNAP. #SNAPworks for kids & helps them get the nutrition they need to grow http://ow.ly/M4snF
- [insert your senator or representative’s handle here] SNAP helps kids in [insert your state abbreviation here] get the nutrition they need. How #SNAPworks in your district http://ow.ly/M4snF Please support!

For more information on the Academy’s federal advocacy efforts on SNAP and other child nutrition programs, please visit aap.org/federalnutrition.
Advocate of the Week Spotlight

For one Legislative Conference participant and dedicated child health advocate, a simple advocacy gesture quickly materialized into an opportunity to prioritize children’s health.

Lisa Costello, MD, MPH, is an internal medicine and pediatrics resident at West Virginia University and a member of the AAP Section on Medical Students, Residents, and Fellowship Trainees (SOMSRFT) Executive Committee. While Dr. Costello was on Capitol Hill, she was hoping to connect with Rep. Evan Jenkins (R-W.Va.), who she had worked with and learned from during his time as a state senator. When she stopped by his office, Rep. Jenkins was not there, but instead of turning around, Dr. Costello left a note with her contact information.

Much to her surprise, Dr. Costello soon received a voicemail from the Rep. Jenkins himself and returned to his office where she was unexpectedly offered the opportunity to kick-off his staff meeting by sharing why she was in Washington. In true tweetiatrician fashion, Dr. Costello shared her experience on social media, to later be retweeted and mentioned by Rep. Jenkins.

"I was reminded by AAP President Dr. Hassink that advocacy is ‘about creating a space where you can have a conversation for children,’” said Dr. Costello. “It was a full circle advocacy moment for me: I had the opportunity to catch up with one of my first advocacy mentors, who is now working on issues that are important to me and the children and families I care for on a regular basis.”

Ever since she can remember, Dr. Costello has enjoyed being a part of a cause, and has pursued that passion through her work in many facets of child health advocacy.

Her advice: “Regardless of where you are in your training or practice, believe you make a difference -- because you do! It's never too early or too late to start, but you do have to start somewhere and it is easier than you think: whether it’s writing a letter to the editor, being a tweetiatrician and engaging on social media, or visiting your legislators on Capitol Hill or in your state house. Child health advocates are needed everywhere and make a difference at every level!”

Save the Date: 2016 AAP Legislative Conference

Mark your calendars--it’s never too early to start planning for the next AAP Legislative Conference! The 25th AAP Legislative Conference will take place April 3-5, 2016, in Washington, DC. Join us next spring to learn more about how to become a strong advocate for children’s health. Additional details to follow.
What We’re Reading & Watching

- A blog post published in The Boston Globe by Claire McCarthy, MD, FAAP, “It’s Time to Wake Up About Teens Using E-Cigarettes”
- WATCH: A video featuring Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, MBA, and Elmo on the importance of vaccinations
- An Associated Press story showing the connection between the Affordable Care Act and increased enrollment in SNAP

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

Where will you be in April of next year?
If you’re not sure, here’s one thing we can make clear:
Washington in the springtime is quite nice
And on top of that we don’t have to tell you twice
That child advocacy is an effective thing to do
Which is why we’re asking each and every one of you
To mark your calendars for the best conference ever seen
Yes, the Leg Con! April 3rd through 5th, two thousand and sixteen
Please join us as we urge Congress to move the ball
When it comes to children’s health, once and for all

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
April 17, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:
- Congress Takes Strong, Bipartisan Action to Extend CHIP and Renew Home Visiting
- Legislative Conference Attendees Help Push Landmark Legislation Across the Finish Line
- AAP President Speaks at Congressional Briefing on Infants and Toddlers
- Senate HELP Committee Advances Education Bill
- CMS Releases Proposed Rule to Extend Consumer Protections of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act
- Congress Holds Hearings on Child Nutrition
- Budget and Appropriations Update
- Advocate(s) of the Week Spotlight: AAP Key Contacts!
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**Congress Takes Strong, Bipartisan Action to Extend CHIP and Renew Home Visiting**

On Tuesday night, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 92-8, the U.S. Senate passed the *Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015*, which will extend funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for two years, renew the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV), and permanently repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula to avoid annual cuts to Medicare payments. The Senate’s action followed a vote of 392-37 in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the bill was signed by President Obama yesterday.

Funding for CHIP was set to expire in September absent congressional action. MIECHV was previously authorized until the end of March, and as a result of Tuesday’s vote, will now be extended for two more years. With the passage of the *Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act*, between 8 and 10 million children will be able to continue participating in CHIP and maintain access to their medical homes.

The bill’s passage, which also came on the heels of the AAP Legislative Conference (see section below), has been a top federal advocacy priority for the Academy, making Tuesday’s bipartisan action a monumental achievement for children’s health. Leading up to the Senate’s vote, AAP President Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP, sent a letter to the more than 62,000 members of the Academy, calling on them to urge their senators to support the bill.
“Pediatricians have been speaking up in support of these programs on Capitol Hill and in state governors’ offices, and the bipartisan action we’ve seen from our federal leaders demonstrates that our voices have been heard,” said Dr. Hassink in a press release following the Senate’s action. “Now families can have peace of mind and state legislatures can plan ahead knowing that the fate of CHIP and home visiting programs is certain.”

**Legislative Conference Attendees Help Push Landmark Legislation Across the Finish Line**

*Pictured above: AAP Legislative Conference attendees participate in a Fun Run & Walk around the National Mall after a day jam-packed with interactive trainings and advocacy workshops.*

The 2015 AAP Legislative Conference, which kicked off this Sunday, brought more than 130 medical students, residents and pediatricians from across the country to Washington, DC, making it the largest conference in the program’s history, but the history-making did not stop there...

On Tuesday, participants headed to Capitol Hill with two important asks of their federal legislators: 1) For the Senate to pass legislation to extend CHIP and renew MIECHV, and 2) For support in both chambers for the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act, which is legislation to protect children from poisonings caused by liquid nicotine used in e-cigarettes.

Throughout Tuesday afternoon, participants representing 38 different states visited more than 130 congressional offices, educating legislative staff about the importance of these programs and policies to children’s health. Pediatricians asked, and Congress listened. Within hours, the Senate passed the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act to extend CHIP and renew MIECHV—a huge victory for children made possible by the unified front of pediatricians on the Hill!

Leading up to their day on Capitol Hill, participants heard from a diverse lineup of expert speakers including U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Representative Jim McGovern (D-Mass.), Former Representative Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), Tennessee Assistant Commissioner of Health Michael Warren, MD, FAAP, Chris Jennings, who was a senior health policy advisor to six presidential campaigns, and Julie Beckett, a parent advocate who fought tirelessly for the first Medicaid Home and Community Based waiver for her daughter. Upon their arrival
on the Hill, Representative Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) addressed the group and emphasized the strength of the pediatrician advocate voice.

In addition, participants attended numerous skills-building sessions and interactive workshops led by expert AAP faculty from the Committee on Federal Government Affairs and the Committee on State Government Affairs as well as AAP staff. The three-day conference also featured the first Advanced Advocacy Track, which included in-depth workshops tailored to those with extensive experience in federal or state level advocacy. One panel focused on the perspectives of pediatricians currently working within the federal government including Aimee Grace, MD, FAAP, a health legislative assistant for Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), Clara Filice, MD, MPH, MHS, a medical officer in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation's Office of Health Policy, and Heidi Schumacher, MD, FAAP, a clinical pediatrician and a program lead within the Patient Care Models Group at the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation.

The Legislative Conference was extended beyond Washington, DC by active participation on social media. The conference utilized the hashtag #AAPLegCon and included 3,087 tweets from 447 contributors across the country. The collective reach of these messages was more than one million people who had seen the hashtag. The word cloud below shows the most popular take-aways being tweeted throughout the conference.

For photos from the conference, visit the AAP Department of Federal Affairs’ Facebook page, www.facebook.com/aapfederalaffairs.

Save the date: The 2016 AAP Legislative Conference will take place on April 3-5 in Washington, DC.

AAP President Speaks at Congressional Briefing on Infants and Toddlers
On Thursday, Dr. Hassink spoke at a congressional briefing on the state of U.S. infants and toddlers. Sponsored by the bipartisan Congressional Baby Caucus, the briefing focused on key indicators of child well-being in the United States and their health implications, the impact of federal and international programs and policies on the well-being of at-risk infants and toddlers, and the effect of trauma on children in military families. During her remarks, Dr. Hassink discussed the impact of adverse childhood experiences on child development, well-being and lifelong health.

Pictured left to right: Co-Chair of the Congressional Baby Caucus Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) and Dr. Hassink.

**Senate HELP Committee Advances Education Bill**

Yesterday, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee passed the *Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*, a reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*. The legislation, which was bipartisan in nature and negotiated between Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.), passed unanimously in committee in a 22-0 vote.

The bill returns more control over education to states and local education agencies, but still requires states to test children annually. The bill also includes physical education as a core course, and ensures that federal funds can be used for early childhood education – both Academy priorities. Over the three days of mark-ups, the committee considered 57 amendments, of which 29 were adopted, 20 were withdrawn, and eight were defeated. It is expected that many of the withdrawn amendments will be brought up when the bill goes to the Senate floor.

Three successful amendments to the bill relevant to child health are as follows:

- Sen. Chris Murphy’s (D-Conn.) measure to improve seclusion and restraint protocol in schools;
- Sen. Bob Casey’s proposal (D-Pa.) to encourage a grant program linking schools with educational public television programming; and
- Sens. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Johnny Isakson’s measure (R-Ga.) providing grants to enhance preschool opportunities in states.

Though the bill has cleared committee, it must now be considered on the Senate floor, where it is expected that numerous additional amendments will be offered. If passed by the Senate, the legislation would need to be reconciled with the House version of the bill, the *Student Success Act* (H.R. 5), which is drastically different, was passed on partisan lines through committee, and has not yet been taken up by the full House.
CMS Releases Proposed Rule to Extend Consumer Protections of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act

Last week, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released a proposed rule that applies the consumer protections of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) of 2008 to Medicaid Managed Care Organizations, Alternative Benefit Plans and CHIP. Final rules for MHPAEA took effect on July 1, 2014, but they only applied to private insurance plans. Since then, the AAP and many other advocates have been pressing CMS to ensure that the same protections for mental health and substance use disorder apply to children and families enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP.

While MHPAEA does not mandate insurers provide coverage for mental health and substance use disorders, it does require that if a plan covers mental health and substance use disorders that coverage can be no more restrictive than coverage for medical and surgical services. The AAP Department of Federal Affairs is examining the proposed rule and will be submitting comments.

Congress Holds Hearings on Child Nutrition

The child nutrition reauthorization process kicked off on Wednesday with a hearing in the House Education and Workforce Committee titled, “Serving Students and Families through Child Nutrition Programs.” The last reauthorization of the child nutrition programs, which took place in 2010, strengthened the nutritional standards for the school meals programs. While more than 93% of schools are meeting these new requirements, some, including Committee Chairman Rep. John Kline (R-Minn.), are pushing for flexibility under the nutrition standards.

As part of its two-year review of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the House Agriculture Committee met on Wednesday to examine the role that non-profit charities play in helping provide food to those who need it. Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (R-Texas) held the hearing to help Congress understand how to better coordinate the efforts of the federal government and the private sector in combatting food insecurity. The witnesses stressed that charitable programs are effective supplements to federal assistance programs like SNAP, but that charity alone would not be enough to serve all of those living in the United States who are food-insecure. One of the witnesses, Keleigh Green-Patton, a former SNAP beneficiary, spoke about the impact SNAP had on her life, “Many people call SNAP a safety net, but for me it was like a trampoline—bouncing my family back into work and a brighter future.”

Budget and Appropriations Update

This week, the Senate and House Budget Committees named their conferees to the conference committee that will resolve the differences between the House and Senate Budget Resolutions. Though the Budget Control and Impoundment Act of 1974 mandates that budgets be passed by April 15 of the fiscal year (FY), there are no official consequences for missing this deadline. House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) has stated that he expects the budget differences to be resolved by the end of the month.
On the appropriations side, subcommittees in the House began holding hearings related to their respective appropriations bills. The first two considered this week were the Military Construction/Veterans Affairs bill and the Energy-Water bill. On Wednesday, Tom Frieden, MD, MPH, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, Labor, and Education. Dr. Frieden discussed the idea of a contingency fund similar to the Overseas Contingency Fund that would exist outside of budget caps, but would be used to address public health crises, like the Ebola crisis last fall. The fund, which would be called the Public Health Emergency Response Initiative, was proposed by President Obama in his FY 2016 budget and would cost approximately $110 million.

This fund would, in a sense, mimic the approach now taken for natural disasters, in which Congress has a pool of money readily available for rapid response. This would help alleviate the issues experienced last fall wherein funding for fighting Ebola was tied up in Congress when it was needed most.

**Advocate(s) of the Week Spotlight: AAP Key Contacts!**

As a member of the AAP Key Contact Network, you have received numerous requests for advocacy action from the AAP Department of Federal Affairs on the need to extend CHIP. Hundreds of you have emailed or called your federal legislators on the importance of the program, visited your congressional offices in Washington, DC, to advocate for its extension, and even published op-eds or letters to the editor in your local newspaper.

**This week, all of your hard work paid off!** Thank you for your dedication to child health advocacy, which made the passage of this critical legislation a reality – a true example of the difference your voice can make for children.

We look forward to continuing to work with pediatrician advocates like you to help put children first!

**What We’re Reading**

- New [data](#) from the CDC showing a surge in e-cigarette use among middle and high school students
- A new [survey](#) from the Urban Institute showing the number of uninsured down by 15 million
- The April 2015 AAP News [Letter from the President](#) on the importance of sound nutrition and healthy activity as a basic foundation of health for every child
- A [webpage](#) with information about SNAP participation by congressional district
- A new [analysis](#) from the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty on the effects of Medicaid expansion

**This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap**
As the cherry blossoms bloomed at their peak, Pediatricians came to Washington to speak Up for children and tell Congress why Extending CHIP funding was worth more than a try Their voices were loud and their message was strong Soon Congress confirmed what we’ve known all along: CHIP is successful and it works for kids just great The Senate vote to pass it was ninety-two to eight! Now families and state budgets can both rest assured Since for the next two years CHIP’s funding is secured That is the power of advocacy in action, And of child-focused policies gaining traction From the state house to Capitol Hill If you don’t speak up for kids than who will? So save the date for Leg Con next year: April 3-5. Bring your advocacy gear!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
March 20, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:
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**Congress Makes Progress on CHIP Reauthorization and “Doc Fix”**

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives announced that it had negotiated a package to repeal the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), and to extend the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for two additional years through fiscal year (FY) 2017. The Academy expects for the package to be introduced over the next few days with a vote occurring in the House next Thursday. Yesterday, Rep. Michael Burgess (R-Texas), a physician, introduced legislation that would repeal the SGR, but there has yet to be legislative language on CHIP.

Senate Democrats have continued to advocate for a four-year extension of CHIP in exchange for beneficiary cuts that are expected to be part of the SGR package.

The Academy is monitoring the situation and continues to advocate for a robust extension of CHIP.

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

*AAP hosts Twitter storm to urge Congress to extend CHIP*

On Wednesday, AAP hosted a Twitter storm in conjunction with other child health-focused organizations in an effort to urge Congress to extend CHIP funding. Overall, 919 contributors sent 3,002 tweets using #ExtendCHIP for a total reach of 1.96 million. The storm – which generated so many tweets that #ExtendCHIP was trending in Washington, DC – attracted a diverse group of participants, including child health advocacy groups, pediatricians and members of Congress from both political parties. [Click here](#) for a summary of the event.
This week, help keep the momentum going in support of CHIP by continuing to contact your members of Congress via social media. Find your member of Congress on Twitter.

Twitter

- [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], I am a pediatrician and I see every day how #CHIPworks for my patients. Please vote to #ExtendCHIP.
- [insert your representative or senator’s handle here] Please, #ExtendCHIP. I’m a pediatrician, and many of my patients are counting on you!

Pediatrician Speaks at Press Conference on Detergent Poisoning Legislation


Dr. Quinlan spoke about recent research in Pediatrics that found from 2012 to 2013, U.S. poison control centers received reports of 17,230 children younger than age six swallowing, inhaling or being exposed to chemicals in laundry detergent packets, requiring hospitalization for 769 children and resulting in one confirmed death. Dr. Quinlan highlighted the urgent need to move forward to address this child poisoning threat and commended the members of Congress for leading this legislative effort. Other speakers at the event included a mother of a child who was hospitalized from detergent packet exposure and a Consumers’ Union representative.

Pictured left to right: Dr. Quinlan and Sen. Durbin following the press conference.

The bill would require the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to review a standard currently under development by ASTM International, a voluntary standards development organization, to make sure that the standard adequately protects children age five and younger from injury or illness associated with exposure to the detergent packets. If the ASTM standard fails to adequately protect against the hazards posed to children by these packets, CPSC may then set a standard for laundry packets that would do the following: require packets to meet the child-resistant packaging standards of the Poison Prevention Packaging Act, address their design and color to reduce attractiveness to children, address the composition of the packets to make the health consequences of exposure less
severe, and prescribe warning labels to adequately inform consumers of the product risks.

**Legislation Important to Children’s Health Advances**

*Protecting Our Infants Act*

On Thursday, Reps. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) and Steve Stivers (R-Ohio) and Sens. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Bob Casey (D-Pa.) reintroduced the AAP-supported *Protecting Our Infants Act of 2015*. The legislation directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to identify and make available recommendations for the diagnosis and treatment of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), evaluate and coordinate federal efforts to research and respond to NAS, and assist state health agencies with their data collection efforts. The AAP, along with the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the March of Dimes, worked closely with champions in both chambers to craft the legislation. All three organizations endorsed the bill, and released a statement following its reintroduction, which was picked up by DC beltway press.

Upon introduction of the bill, Sen. McConnell spoke on the Senate floor to urge Congress to move quickly on the bill and noted the strong support of the AAP for the legislation.

NAS refers to medical complications associated with drug withdrawal in newborns due to exposure to opioids or other drugs in utero. Babies born with NAS often need to be hospitalized for weeks, are difficult to console, and can suffer from seizures and other complications. There are no standardized guidelines for diagnosis and treatment for these newborns, and there is an urgent need for more research to optimize the identification and treatment of babies with NAS to determine any long-term health impacts.

*Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act*

Earlier this week, Congress reintroduced the *Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act*, which would allow workers to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for themselves or their families, and would be funded by employers and employees at fractions of a cent per dollar earned. Currently, only 13% of private sector employees have access to paid family leave. The AAP joined with the Pediatric Policy Council (PPC) to urge Congress to quickly pass the legislation, and released a joint statement following the bill’s reintroduction.

"The FAMILY Act is important legislation that gives working families the opportunity to provide their children with the attention and support they need during their earliest, and most critical, time of development,” said AAP President Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP, in the release.

The Hill, a DC beltway publication, covered the AAP and PPC response to the reintroduction, “Pediatricians join push for paid family leave.”

**Child Nutrition Update**

*AAP Department of Federal Affairs debuts new child nutrition website*
The AAP Department of Federal Affairs is pleased to announce a new Child Nutrition webpage in the Federal Advocacy section of AAP.org, which includes an overview of critical federal child nutrition and anti-hunger programs, and information on the Academy’s advocacy to ensure they stay as strong and effective as possible. The webpage will serve as a resource to pediatricians and the public as Congress begins the process of reauthorizing federal nutrition programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), School Meals, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

Please be on the look-out for future opportunities to speak up for children’s health and to tell Congress about the importance of federal nutrition programs— please stay tuned!

**AAP President-Elect Discusses Importance of Nutrition**

On Wednesday, AAP President-Elect Benard Dreyer, MD, FAAP, along with leadership of the American Medical Association and the American Heart Association, joined U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack to call on Congress to maintain healthy school meals standards. In his remarks, Dr. Dreyer discussed why a solid foundation of strong nutrition is crucial to supporting children’s lifelong health, and how it can help lift children out of poverty. “Keeping children healthy is not a political issue; it’s a moral imperative,” said Dr. Dreyer.

**Child nutrition legislation introduced**

Several pieces of AAP-endorsed legislation relating to child nutrition have been introduced in Congress this month:

*School Food Modernization Act (SFMA) (S. 540)*

The legislation was introduced by Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.). The bill, largely the same as the version introduced last Congress, would give school districts and food service administrators the tools and resources they need to prepare meals that meet the updated USDA school food standards.

*Summer Meals Act of 2015 (S. 613)*

Introduced by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Ark.), the legislation is intended to support and expand summer feeding programs, and would ensure that low-income children have access to healthy food throughout the summer.

*Farm to School Act of 2015 (H.R. 1061 and S.569)*

Introduced in the Senate and House by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio) and Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb.), this bipartisan, bicameral bill aims to improve the successful USDA Farm to School Grant program, which provides resources to assist in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

**Appropriations Update**
This week, both the House and the Senate Budget Committees released and passed their FY 2016 Budget Resolutions. These non-binding pieces of legislation, if passed in both chambers, do not become law. However, they outline the respective chambers’ ideals and positions on certain issues.

The House budget retained the current budget caps for defense and non-defense discretionary spending for FY 2016, which are $523.1 billion and $493.5 billion respectively, but proposed additional cuts to non-defense discretionary spending starting in 2017 in order to pay for increases in defense discretionary funding:

- The total cut to non-defense discretionary spending through 2025 would be $759 billion, or 14% below current caps. Overall, the budget cuts $5.5 trillion over 10 years.
- The House budget proposed turning both the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid into block grant programs, as well as other cuts to entitlement programs totaling $1 trillion over 10 years.
- Additionally, the resolution contained reconciliation instructions to 13 authorizing committees to make large cuts and repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Yesterday, the House Budget Committee voted 22-13 to report the budget resolution to the full House.

The Senate budget also retains the current caps for FY 2016, and then gradually reduces non-defense discretionary funds by at least $263 billion until FY 2025, which is 4% below current caps:

- The budget includes a “deficit neutral reserve fund” with provides the option to raise defense and non-defense caps this year. However, this is a largely symbolic inclusion because the budget caps can only be altered legislatively, not through a budget resolution.
- The Senate also proposed turning SNAP and Medicaid into block grant programs.
- Additionally, the Senate included reconciliation instructions in their bill, which directed the Senate Finance Committee and the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee to repeal and replace the ACA.

Yesterday, the Senate also passed their budget in a 12-10 vote.

Going forward, the House and Senate will need to individually pass their budget resolutions, and then reconcile the differences between the resolutions. Both chambers are expected to vote on their respective resolutions next week. With the large differences between the House and Senate proposals, however, it remains to be seen if this task will be able to be completed.

2015 AAP Legislative Conference

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During the Legislative Conference, participants will:
• Attend skills-building workshops in negotiation, social media and crafting effective messages
• Hear firsthand from distinguished guest speakers, such as members of Congress, White House officials and federal agency leaders
• Participate in meetings with congressional staff on Capitol Hill to urge elected officials to put children first in their federal policymaking
• Learn about federal policy priorities impacting children and pediatricians

The weekend of the conference has also been predicted as the peak bloom for the world-famous cherry blossoms around the Tidal Basin! Participants are encouraged to take in the picturesque sight during their time in Washington.

For more information and to download the conference brochure, please visit www.aap.org/legcon.

What We’re Reading

• An op-ed published in the Tampa Tribune by Dr. Hassink and other leaders from child health organizations, “Save the Children’s Health Insurance Program”
• A USDA blog post, “Child and Adult Care Food Program Reaches Far and Wide”
• A Huffington Post piece, “Message to Congress: CHIP Matters to Children”
• An article from West Hartford News on the Detergent PACS Act

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

A few weeks away
Your chance to speak up for kids
Register today!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
March 13, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:

- 2015 AAP Legislative Conference: Early Bird Discount Ends Soon
- Seismic Shift in the Future of the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate
- Medicaid Payment Equity Legislation Reintroduced in Senate
- AAP-Championed *Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2015* Introduced in the House
- Pediatrician presents before FDA on atopic dermatitis in children
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

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Seismic Shift in the Future of the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate

AAP has learned that personal negotiations in the House of Representatives between Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) and Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) are widely rumored to have reached agreement on a possible permanent fix to the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), which caps Medicare payments to physicians. The current SGR patch will expire on March 31, 2015, and physicians will face payment cuts of more than 24 percent unless Congress passes another patch or a permanent solution. Congressional members on both sides of the aisle are suggesting that a full SGR repeal may not need to be fully offset. This is a very different take on the legislation, as previously many lawmakers demanded that there be an offset for every dollar of the cost of a repeal. Until last week, most thought that Congress would only authorize a short-term patch (of three, six or nine months), but House Congressional leadership have been widely reported to have successfully hammered out a deal for a full repeal, without fully offsetting the cost. This news is even more surprising as the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan research organization, estimates that a full repeal of the SGR would cost more than $170 billion.

Medicaid Payment Equity Legislation Reintroduced in Senate

On Thursday, Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) reintroduced the Ensuring Access to Primary Care for Women & Children Act, which would extend the expired Medicaid Payment Equity provision for two years following the legislation’s enactment. The original Medicaid Primary Care Equity provision was part of the Affordable Care Act, which paid primary care physicians, including many pediatric subspecialists, Medicare rates for primary care services provided to Medicaid patients during calendar years 2013 and 2014. Next steps for enactment of the legislation are uncertain. The Academy continues to support efforts at the federal level to extend Medicaid payment equity.

AAP-Championed Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Act of 2015 Introduced in the House

This week, Reps. Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.) and Lois Capps (D-Calif.) introduced the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Act of 2015 (H.R. 1344). The AAP-supported legislation reauthorizes the federal authority for hearing tests and intervention programs for newborns, infants and young children. The legislation, formerly known as the Newborn Infant Hearing and Screening Intervention Act, was originally introduced in 1999 with a strong endorsement from the AAP, and has been reauthorized continuously over the years with AAP’s support. The programs funded through the EHDI Act are due to expire on Sept. 30, 2015, if this legislation is not reauthorized.

The EHDI Act authorizes programs in the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to award grants and cooperative agreements to develop statewide newborn, infant, and young childhood hearing screening diagnosis, evaluation, and intervention programs and systems, as well as authorizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to make grants or cooperative
agreements to develop, maintain and improve data tracking and surveillance systems for newborn, infant and young childhood hearing screenings, evaluations and intervention services. The EHDI Act also directs the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to continue research and development related to early hearing detection and intervention. The legislation requires HRSA, CDC and NIH to collaborate and coordinate with each other and develop policy, as well as ensure that data is being collected. The bill contains an authorization of appropriations of $17.8 million for Fiscal Years 2017-2022.

The Senate has not yet introduced their version of the bill. The Academy will monitor this bill and advocate for its passage as it works its way through both the House and Senate.

**Pediatrician presents before FDA on atopic dermatitis in children**

On Monday, Megha Tollefson, MD, FAAP, an assistant professor of pediatrics and dermatology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., presented to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on behalf of the Academy and its Section on Dermatology concerning research and treatments for atopic dermatitis in children. Dr. Tollefson’s statement, given before an FDA advisory committee on dermatology that was holding a meeting on developing therapies for atopic dermatitis in children, urged the FDA to encourage further research into safe and effective systemic treatments for the disease that go beyond topical remedies that have limited effectiveness for some patients. Dr. Tollefson was a lead author of the recent Academy clinical report on atopic dermatitis.

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

Unless Congress acts, funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program runs out on Oct. 1, 2015, which could cause millions of children to have their insurance coverage disrupted or lose access to affordable coverage altogether. On Wednesday, March 18 at 1 pm ET, join @AmerAcadPeds and other child health advocates for a Twitter storm to help spread the word that CHIP is a critical program for children. Participate by following and using #ExtendCHIP. Find your member of Congress on Twitter.

**Twitter**

- As a pediatrician, I see how #CHIPworks to help kids access the care they need [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], #ExtendCHIP
- Millions of children depend on CHIP to keep them healthy, including many of my patients. [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], please #ExtendCHIP

**Facebook**

- The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) plays a critical role in keeping kids healthy in each and every state. Unless Congress acts, funding for CHIP will run out on Oct. 1, 2015. Help me spread the word that #CHIPworks for kids! [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], #ExtendCHIP
- The Children’s Health Insurance Program is essential to keeping millions of children healthy, including many of my patients. Congress, please #ExtendCHIP. Kids and their pediatricians are counting on you.
Celebrate Match Day on Social Media

Match Day is Friday, March 20. Join the AAP Section on Medical Students, Residents, and Fellowship Trainees (SOMSRFT) in welcoming the newest members into our Pediatrics family. During Match Week, March 16 to March 20, AAP SOMSRFT will be hosting a social media Match Day celebration to share the good news of those matching into Pediatrics. To participate, follow and use #FutureFAAP. Leading up to Match Day, we encourage you to share photos and messages about your own Match experience, and on Friday, March 20, congratulate those at your medical school, residency program or practice. For more information, visit and follow AAP SOMSRFT on Facebook and Twitter.

What We’re Reading

- A story from the Today Show, “Lawmakers take aim at brightly colored laundry pods”

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

With the cherry blossoms blooming
And reauthorizations looming
There could not be a better time—
Trust the author of this rhyme—
To come to DC and learn how
To be an advocate right now
So come to LegCon and rehearse
How to tell Congress, “Put kids first!”
You’ll hear speakers, you’ll learn skills
You’ll get updates on key bills
Pediatricians far and wide
Do not take long to decide
To come to Washington this spring
A voice for children you will bring

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
February 27, 2015

Federal Legislative Update

In this update:

- 2015 AAP Legislative Conference: Early Bird Discount Ends Soon
- Legislation Important to Child Poisoning Prevention Advances
- AAP President Hosts Twitter Chat on State of the Child
- Child Nutrition Update
- CHIP Update
- AAP Commemorates 25th Anniversary of Smoke-Free U.S. Flights
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

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For more information and to download the conference brochure, please visit www.aap.org/legcon.

Legislation Important to Child Poisoning Prevention Advances
**Detergent Poisoning and Child Safety Act**

On Thursday, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) and Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) introduced AAP-endorsed legislation, the *Detergent Poisoning and Child Safety (PACS) Act*, to address the child health threat posed by laundry detergent pods. These brightly-colored, candy-like dissolvable packets of highly-concentrated laundry detergent are appealing to children and associated with significant child exposure and serious health consequences. A recent article in *Pediatrics* found that from 2012 through 2013, U.S. poison control centers received reports of 17,230 children younger than age six swallowing, inhaling or being exposed to chemicals in laundry detergent pods, requiring hospitalization for 769 children and resulting in one confirmed death. The article in *Pediatrics* spurred congressional interest in this issue and contributed to the development of this legislation.

The bill would require the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to review a standard currently under development by ASTM International, a voluntary standards development organization, to make sure that the standard adequately protects children age five and younger from injury or illness associated with exposure to the detergent packets. If the ASTM standard fails to adequately protect against the hazards posed to children by these packets, CPSC may then set a standard for laundry pods that would do the following: ensure the packets meet child-resistant packaging standards, address their design and color to reduce attractiveness to children, address the composition of the pods to reduce exposure severity, and require warning labels.

**Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act**

On Thursday, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee passed the *Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015* (S. 142) by voice vote. Reintroduced by Ranking Member Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.), this bipartisan and AAP-supported legislation would give the CPSC the authority to require child-proof packaging on liquid nicotine containers sold to consumers. The Academy is urging the full Senate to quickly pass this legislation.

“We cannot afford to wait any longer to protect children from potentially deadly nicotine ingestions. The *Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015* is a much-needed step forward to prevent future death and illness caused by liquid nicotine, and pediatricians are urging Congress for its immediate passage. One more small child exposed to these life-threatening products is one too many,” said AAP President Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP, in a statement.

**AAP President Hosts Twitter Chat on State of the Child**

On Tuesday, Feb. 17, Dr. Hassink participated in a Twitter chat using the hashtag #everychildneeds to discuss the foundations of child health and how pediatricians, parents and others can ensure child health issues remain top of mind in Congress and their communities. This was the first event in a series of standing chats Dr. Hassink will lead on varying topics.

Approximately 80 individuals participated in the chat, with a majority of them being pediatricians and other child health advocates. During the chat, Dr. Hassink shared the importance of addressing children’s three basic needs: sound nutrition, nurturing relationships and safe environments. Dr. Hassink also emphasized the
need for Congress to invest in programs to improve quality of life for children and families in poverty, including the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Head Start, and those that provide high-quality child care.

To view a summary of the chat, please visit: https://storify.com/AmerAcadPeds/everychildneeds-state-of-the-child

Child Nutrition Update

Committee releases new dietary recommendations

Last week, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, consisting of nationally-recognized experts in the field of nutrition and health, released new recommendations for Americans aged two and older. The expert committee, which included Steve Abrams, MD, FAAP, member of the AAP Committee on Nutrition, found that the American diet is deficient in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and includes too much salt and sugar. The panel, which meets every five years, updated previous recommendations that suggested limits on fat and cholesterol, and instead placed an emphasis on dietary patterns. Somewhat controversially, the committee recommended that Americans eat less meat – both for health benefits and environmental sustainability. The findings of the committee are now open for comment and will be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services before they are issued as the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Congress holds hearings to examine key nutrition programs

It was a busy week on the Hill for nutrition programs, with hearings examining the SNAP program as well as the USDA’s fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget. Concerns about the Dietary Guidelines and child nutrition programs dominated the House Subcommittee on Agriculture Appropriations hearing on the USDA budget. USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack urged the committee to consider the fact that one in four children in rural America live in poverty when proposing a budget for the agency, which administers child nutrition programs like WIC and school meals.

The House Agriculture Committee held a hearing to examine the SNAP program, as part of the committee’s broader review of the program. Members focused largely on SNAP participants' income, work requirements and demographics, as well as the program’s relation to other federal aid like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The SNAP program faces dangerous budget cuts in the current congressional environment.

AAP president delivers opening remarks at IOM workshop

Also this week, Dr. Hassink offered opening remarks at an Institute of Medicine workshop titled, “Examining a Developmental Approach to Childhood Obesity: The Fetal and Early Childhood Years.” In her remarks, Dr. Hassink spoke about the foundational importance of sound nutrition in achieving and sustaining optimal child health and well-being throughout the life course.

CHIP Update
House Republicans release discussion draft on CHIP

On Tuesday, House Energy and Commerce Chairman Fred Upton (R-Mich.), Health Subcommittee Chairman Joe Pitts (R-Pa.) and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) released a discussion draft to solicit feedback on the extension of CHIP funding.

The discussion draft proposes to extend CHIP funding, but suggests significant policy changes such as eliminating federal funding for children of families with incomes greater than 300 percent of the federal poverty level, and reducing federal funding for children of families with incomes greater than 250 percent of the federal poverty level. The draft also proposes to end the maintenance-of-effort provision, which requires states to maintain eligibility levels through 2019. The AAP will submit comments to this proposal and welcomes the opportunity to work with Congress to extend funding for this vital program for children.

Pediatrician addresses importance of CHIP and Medicaid at briefing

On Feb. 20, Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, chair of the AAP Committee on Federal Government Affairs, addressed more than 100 congressional staffers at a briefing titled, “Medicaid and CHIP 101.” The event was hosted by the bipartisan Congressional Children’s Health Care Caucus. Dr. Raulerson spoke about the importance of Medicaid and CHIP to children in her rural Alabama practice, especially those who face complex medical conditions.

Pictured left to right: Dr. Raulerson, Cynthia Pellegrini, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Government Affairs for the March of Dimes, and Elisabeth Wright Burak, Senior Program Director for the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families.

AAP Commemorates 25th Anniversary of Smoke-Free U.S. Flights

On Wednesday, the AAP and several other public health and tobacco control organizations joined Sen. Durbin to celebrate the 25th anniversary of legislation to make all domestic plane flights smoke-free. Then-Representative Durbin and the late Sen. Frank Lautenberg (R-N.J.) championed bipartisan legislation banning smoking first on short domestic flights and then finally on all domestic flights. The law, which went into effect on Feb. 25, 1990, has saved countless children and their families from the harms of secondhand smoke. The Academy issued a press statement on the anniversary.

The AAP has worked for years to extend similar smoking restrictions in all areas where children live, work, and play, including multi-unit housing, and is urging
Congress to continue its efforts to keep children safe from secondhand smoke on all levels.

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

As a follow up to Dr. Hassink’s Twitter chat, help keep the #everychildneeds conversation going by educating your members of Congress about the foundations of child health and children’s basic needs. [Find your member of Congress on Twitter](https://twitter.com)

- #Everychildneeds sound nutrition, nurturing relationships & safe environments. [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], please make child health a priority
- Sound nutrition, nurturing relationships & a safe environment are what #everychildneeds. Congress, help children reach their full potential

**What We’re Reading**

- A [letter](https://www.lobbyingdaily.com) from more than 1,500 organizations, including the Academy, urging congressional leadership to take action this year to protect the millions of children who rely on CHIP

**This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap**

A busy week here in Washington...
Detergent PACS Act introduced to prevent child poisonings
Various child nutrition programs discussed during hearings
One step closer to passage of the liquid nicotine poisoning prevention bill
Commemoration of 25 years of smoke-free flights takes place on the Hill
Advocacy for child health remains strong, and now, for an opportunity to tag along:
Come [join us](https://www.facebook.com) this spring for our Legislative Conference
Your voice can make a real difference!

*Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!* ☮️✈️
February 13, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:
- Speak Up for Children: Attend the 2015 AAP Legislative Conference
- Pediatricians Testify Before Senate HELP Committee on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
- House and Senate Introduce Legislation to Extend CHIP
- AAP Submits Comments Supporting New Voluntary Health and Safety Standards for Child Care and Education Settings
- Congress Begins Work on Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- Webinar: “A Win for Children: The Story of the AAP Florida Chapter Medicaid Lawsuit”
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- Advocate of the Week Spotlight
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

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There are a limited number of scholarships available to cover the cost of registration for the conference. If you are interested in applying, please fill out an [application](#) and submit it to LegislativeConference@aap.org by **noon ET on Friday, Feb. 27**. Please click [here](#) to download the application.

If you experience difficulty downloading the application, please email Devin Miller in the AAP DC Office at dmliller@aap.org.
Pediatricians Testify Before Senate HELP Committee on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

On Tuesday, Mark Sawyer, MD, FAAP, and Tim Jacks, DO, FAAP (pictured left to right) testified before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee in a hearing titled, “The Reemergence of Vaccine Preventable Diseases: Exploring the Public Health Successes and Challenges.” Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-Wash.) both used their opening statements to declare support for vaccines, as well as to establish the sound science behind their success.

The first panel included Anne Schuchat, MD, RADM, USPHS, director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Schuchat discussed the overall public health success of vaccines and emphasized the importance of vaccinating children in a world where many diseases are only a plane ride away.

The second panel included Dr. Sawyer, Dr. Jacks and Kelly Moore, MD, MPH, director of the immunization program at the Tennessee Department of Health. Dr. Sawyer’s testimony, which was strongly endorsed by the AAP, addressed the measles outbreak at Disneyland and in Orange County, Calif., calling on his first-hand experience talking to parents and families in the area about the need to vaccinate their children. Dr. Sawyer also emphasized the need to reduce the number of parents who choose not to vaccinate their children to help ensure vaccine-preventable diseases do not reemerge.

Following Dr. Sawyer, Dr. Jacks shared his compelling story with the committee in his role as a parent. Both his daughter, who has leukemia and cannot be vaccinated, and his son, who is too young to receive vaccinations, were exposed to measles in the waiting room of an outpatient clinic, and have been under quarantine for about two weeks. In his testimony, Dr. Jacks conveyed the idea of herd immunity, emphasizing that because his own children could not be vaccinated, they relied on others around them to be properly immunized.
The Senate hearing and the testimony from Drs. Sawyer and Jacks received local, regional and national news attention, including coverage by outlets such as MSNBC, ABC News, NBC News, NBC News San Diego, CQ Roll Call and Politico.

**House and Senate Introduce Legislation to Extend CHIP**

On Thursday, the House and Senate introduced legislation to extend CHIP funding through 2019. Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) and Bob Casey (D-Penn.) introduced the Protecting and Retaining Our Children’s Health Insurance Program Act (PRO-CHIP Act, S. 522), which would be a clean extension of funding. The House bill, CHIP Extension and Improvement Act of 2015 (H.R. 919), was introduced by Representative Gene Greene (D-Texas) and includes additional provisions such as coverage of preventive health services, timely immunization coverage and an extension of the Medicaid payment parity provision for primary care providers.

The Senate bill was cosponsored by every member of the democratic caucus and the House bill was cosponsored by every democratic member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Following the introduction of the bicameral legislation, the Academy issued a statement that was picked up by DC beltway press.

**AAP Submits Comments Supporting New Voluntary Health and Safety Standards for Child Care and Education Settings**

On Thursday, the Academy submitted comments in support of the Administration for Children and Families’ (ACF) proposed set of voluntary health and safety standards for early child care and education settings: Caring for Our Children Basics. Caring for Our Children Basics is designed to establish a minimum threshold for child health and safety for all early education and child care centers, while providing guidance to state regulators and providers that addresses the variability in standards for programs depending on their federal funding source.

These standards include guidelines for a range of factors affecting child health and safety, including safe sleep practices, background checks for childcare providers, prevention of infectious diseases and medical training for childcare personnel.

The ACF’s Caring for Our Children Basics was developed off of a comprehensive set of broad-reaching standards called Caring for Our Children, now in its third edition, which were written with support from the AAP, along with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, the American Public Health Association and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

The Academy’s comments express strong support for ACF’s proposal, and offer suggestions to help ensure that providers can adopt the standards.

**Congress Begins Work on Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

On Wednesday, Chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee Representative John Kline (R-Minn.) held a mark-up of his No Child Left Behind replacement, the Student Success Act (H.R. 5). The Student Success Act contains a myriad of reforms to its predecessor, and gives a great deal of control over
education to states and local education agencies. The bill passed out of committee along party lines (21-16), and will now move to the House floor.

The Senate bill, however, is not moving as quickly. Senators Alexander and Murray have decided to collaborate on the bill. Although Alexander initially introduced his own version of the bill, the two senators have announced that they will start over and attempt to draft a bill that is bipartisan. There is currently no timetable for introduction of this new legislation.

**Webinar: “A Win for Children: The Story of the AAP Florida Chapter Medicaid Lawsuit”**

Join the Academy for a webinar titled, "A Win for Children: The Story of the AAP Florida Chapter Medicaid Lawsuit" on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 1:00 PM EST.

For years, nearly two million Florida children have faced significant barriers to needed medical and dental care in the Florida Medicaid program due to inadequate Medicaid payment. A federal judge recently ruled in favor of the chapter in its lawsuit against the state Medicaid program.

Join this webinar to learn more about the work that went into this lawsuit, where things are headed in Florida Medicaid, and the implications that another suit currently before the U.S. Supreme Court could have on the ability of physicians to seek enforcement of federal Medicaid law.

To register for the webinar, please click [here](http://ow.ly/J0nir).

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

As mentioned above, both the House and Senate introduced legislation to extend CHIP funding for four more years. This Valentine’s Day, help spread the word that CHIP is an essential program for children and urge your members of Congress to extend CHIP without delay. [Find your member of Congress on Twitter](http://ow.ly/J0nir).

- #ValentinesDay is a reminder of what is most important in life. Let's come together for our children and #ExtendCHIP [http://ow.ly/J0nir](http://ow.ly/J0nir)
- Our children are the heart of this nation. We owe it to them to protect their health and #ExtendCHIP [http://ow.ly/J0nir](http://ow.ly/J0nir)
- Children's Health Insurance Program covers 8M low-income kids in working families. Show kids the love, #ExtendCHIP [http://ow.ly/J0nir](http://ow.ly/J0nir)

**Advocate of the Week Spotlight**

**Resident helps lead district’s upcoming CHIP letter writing campaign**

Christian Pulcini, MD, *(pictured left)* is a first-year resident at the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Although he is just at the beginning of his advocacy journey, Dr.
Pulcini has offered a strong voice for children through his work.

In his role as the AAP District III Assistant District Coordinator, Dr. Pulcini is helping to organize a CHIP letter writing campaign within his district to support the AAP Section on Medical Students, Residents and Fellowship Trainees’ (SOMSRFT) national advocacy campaign, FACE Poverty. The campaign, which will run from Feb. 14 to Feb. 28, will engage medical schools, residency programs and fellowship programs across District III in sending letters in support of CHIP to federal legislators.

“The campaign grew organically out of the efforts of a group of committed residents and medical students in District III who are dedicated to advocacy and the SOMSRFT FACE Poverty campaign,” said Dr. Pulcini. “It is an exciting effort that we hope will inspire all trainees and members of the AAP to participate, even outside of our district.”

Dr. Pulcini became interested in child health advocacy while he was working as a middle school science teacher as part of the Teach for America program, and that interest has followed him through his work in pediatrics.

“I feel strongly that our duty as pediatricians to optimize the health of children carries over into the local community, schools and our legislative offices,” said Dr. Pulcini. “Pediatricians are respected members of society, and the value and power of our collective voice in speaking out on behalf of those who cannot advocate on behalf of themselves cannot be underestimated.”

What We’re Reading

- A piece by Symplur on the Academy’s #MeaslesTruth Twitter Storm that was held last Friday
- An op-ed in The New York Times by Paul Offit, MD, FAAP, on the measles outbreak

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

Roses are red and violets are blue
CHIP soon expires—it’s time to renew
So as we spread love on this Valentine’s Day
We will show our support with a CHIP, CHIP, hooray,
Urging Congress to act to extend CHIP, and soon
So that children are covered from here to the moon

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
February 6, 2015

Federal Legislative Update

In this update:
- Scholarships Available! Register for the 2015 Legislative Conference
- President Obama Releases Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Proposal
- IOM Releases Findings Following Review of WIC Food Packages
- Senate Indian Affairs Committee Approves AAP-Endorsed Legislation
- NIH Developing Next Phase of National Children’s Study
- FDA Commissioner Announces Departure
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

Scholarships Available! Register for the 2015 Legislative Conference

The Academy will host its 24th Legislative Conference on April 12-14, 2015, in Washington, DC.

Just announced: There are a limited number of scholarships available to cover the cost of registration for the conference. If you are interested in applying, please fill out an application and submit it to LegislativeConference@aap.org by noon ET on Friday, Feb. 27. Please click here to download the application.

If you experience difficulty downloading the application, please email Devin Miller in the AAP DC Office at dmill@aar.org.

During the Legislative Conference, participants will:
- Attend skills-building workshops in negotiation, social media and crafting effective messages
- Hear firsthand from distinguished guest speakers, such as members of Congress, White House officials and federal agency leaders
- Participate in meetings with congressional staff on Capitol Hill to urge elected officials to put children first in their federal policymaking
- Learn about federal policy priorities impacting children and pediatricians
For more information and to download the conference brochure, please visit www.aap.org/legcon.

To register, please click here. Please send any questions to LegislativeConference@aap.org.

**President Obama Releases Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Proposal**

On Monday, President Barack Obama released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget proposal. Although the budget is not likely to be accepted in its entirety by Congress, it outlines the president’s priorities for the nation. In his $3.99 trillion budget, the president lifted the spending caps set forth in the 2011 Budget Control Act and restored more than $70 billion in sequestration cuts. Upon the release of the budget, the AAP issued a press release urging Congress to pass strong federal funding proposals focused on improving the health of every child.

The president’s budget:

- Increases Head Start and preschool development grants
- Includes funding for federal research on gun violence prevention, as well as investments in mental health programs for children
- Increases in Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Demonstrations, which are providing monthly food assistance to low-income children in the summer, increased school meal equipment grants, and funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) that is level with FY 2015
- Supports the Affordable Care Act, extends the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for four more years and proposes to extend Medicaid payment parity through 2016
- Includes level funding from FY 2015 for the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities and the Emergency Medical Services for Children program

Though the president’s budget contained several important priorities for children, it also cut Children’s Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) funding. Instead of maintaining the full amount of dedicated CHGME funding, the president proposed piloting a new initiative: Targeted Support for Graduate Medical Education. This program would provide competitive grants for GME and would include pediatric opportunities. The budget proposal also did not follow through with funding to support the goals of the National Children’s Study (NCS), which was terminated last year.

A comprehensive summary of children’s programs outlined in the president’s budget can be found here.

**IOM Releases Findings Following Review of WIC Food Packages**

On Tuesday, an Institute of Medicine (IOM) expert committee tasked with reviewing the WIC food package released its findings from Phase I of their review, determining that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) should allow white potatoes as a WIC-eligible vegetable.
The IOM found that the WIC eligible population is not consuming recommended amounts of all vegetable subgroups, including starchy vegetables. The IOM noted that since its 2006 recommendation against allowing white potatoes to be purchased with WIC vouchers, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) increased the recommendation for starchy vegetables to 3.5 cups per week for children and 5 cups per week for women. On average, the committee found children are consuming about 64% of what is recommended and women are consuming about 56%. If the DGA recommendations for starchy vegetables change when the newest version of the guidelines is released later this year, the IOM would like to reevaluate the inclusion of white potatoes in the food package.

Following the release of the IOM’s new report, the Academy along with the National WIC Association, First Focus, the Center for Science in the Public Interest and the March of Dimes issued a press statement, urging USDA to heed IOM’s scientific conclusions and calling on Congress to protect WIC by rejecting any efforts to undermine its scientific integrity.

AAP actively advocated for the need for science, not congressional intervention, when re-evaluating the inclusion of white potatoes in the food package. Lanre Falusi, MD, FAAP, president of the AAP DC chapter, offered public remarks at an IOM meeting about the effectiveness of the WIC program, and the need to rely on sound scientific judgment, unbiased by special interests, when determining the food package. In addition, AAP Immediate Past President James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP, submitted a letter to the review committee. The Academy also joined the National WIC Association, the March of Dimes, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and others in a letter to the IOM Committee chair with a similar message.

**Senate Indian Affairs Committee Approves AAP-Endorsed Legislation**

On Thursday, the Senate Indian Affairs Committee unanimously approved the AAP-endorsed Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act (S. 246). The bipartisan bill would create an 11-member bipartisan Commission on Native Children to conduct a comprehensive review and analysis of federal policies and programs affecting American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) children, and offer proposals to improve them. The group would complete this work over three years, culminating in a report to Congress and the Administration offering solutions for improving the impact of federal policy on the lives of AI/AN children. In endorsing the legislation, the AAP noted the significant health disparities Native children face and the challenges they encounter in accessing needed health and social services. The bill now moves to the full Senate.

**NIH Developing Next Phase of National Children’s Study**

Details in the president’s budget released earlier this week indicated that all of the $165 million appropriated in FY 2015 for the NCS will go to pediatric research, despite its recent closure. Of the FY 2015 total, $20 million will be allocated to closing down the NCS, with the remaining $145 million appropriation going toward “Strategic Pediatrics Research,” alternative pediatric study designs aligned with the goals of the NCS. The president’s budget further indicated that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is budgeting $158 million in FY 2016 for “Strategic
Pediatrics Research,” with $7 million being allocated to maintain specimens and data collected during the Vanguard, or pilot, phase of the NCS.

On Jan. 30, Deputy Director of the NIH Lawrence Tabak, DDS, PhD, gave a presentation to the NIH Council of Councils, providing further proposed details for the use of the $145 million appropriated for “Strategic Pediatrics Research” in FY 2015. Proposed initiatives laid out by Dr. Tabak include developing tools to enhance the study of the influences of environment on pediatric disease, investigating the influences of environment on child development in utero, and expanding current programs that study the relationship of environmental factors to child and adolescent development. The NIH must present concrete recommendations for the future use of NCS funding to Congress by mid-March.

As the NIH works to formulate a plan for supporting pediatric research consistent with the goals of the NCS, the Academy will work with the NIH to ensure that it meets the health needs of children.

FDA Commissioner Announces Departure

On Thursday, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg, MD, announced her departure after serving in her role for six years. Following the announcement, the Academy released a statement commending Dr. Hamburg’s work. During her tenure, Dr. Hamburg helped to advance numerous priorities impacting children’s health, including efforts to strengthen pediatrics therapeutics laws, overhaul food safety laws and expand the agency’s jurisdiction to regulate e-cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products.

Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate

On Friday, AAP participated in a #MeaslesTruth Twitter and Facebook storm to help share facts about the measles and spread positive messages about vaccination. The storm generated participation from across the AAP’s tweetiatrician network, as well as other physicians, partner groups, children’s hospitals and child health advocates. Check out the hashtag for more details and to share your #MeaslesTruth.

Join us for a Twitter chat with AAP President Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP, on Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 4 pm PST/7 pm EST to discuss her presidency, the foundations of child health, and the State of the Child. We encourage you to join us using #everychildneeds and to consider questions you’d like to ask Dr. Hassink about federal advocacy issues, including CHIP and child nutrition reauthorization. Help us spread the word:

- Help ensure that children have a healthy start! Join @AmerAcadPeds & @AAPPres on Feb 10 @ 7pm EST to discuss what #everychildneeds

What We’re Reading

- An article from CQ Roll Call on legislation to protect children from liquid nicotine poisonings
• A website from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, TalkHealthInsuranceToMe.org, with tools and resources for the second open enrollment period
• An article published in USA Today, “Presidential candidates split on mandatory vaccines”
• A piece from Off the Charts blog, “Restoring Medicaid payment bump would improve access to care”

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

Pediatricians:
Powerful truth messengers,
Fierce child advocates

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
January 23, 2015

Federal Legislative Update

In this update:

- 2015 Legislative Conference: Register Today!
- AAP Puts the Focus on Children During State of the Union Address
- Pediatrician Discusses Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome During Congressional Briefing
- AAP President-Elect Provides Perspective on Child Poverty
- Global Health Update
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

2015 Legislative Conference: Register Today!

Come join us in Washington, DC, this spring to learn how you can become a strong advocate for children! Registration for the 2015 Legislative Conference, which takes place on April 12-14, 2015, is now open! With a new Congress in office and countless federal child health priorities at stake, there could not be a more critical time for medical students, residents and pediatricians to come together and speak up for children.

During the conference, participants will:

- Attend skills-building workshops in negotiation, social media and crafting effective messages
- Hear firsthand from distinguished guest speakers, such as members of Congress, White House officials and federal agency leaders
- Participate in meetings with congressional staff on Capitol Hill to urge elected officials to put children first in their federal policymaking
- Learn about federal policy priorities impacting children and pediatricians

For more information and to download the conference brochure, please visit www.aap.org/legcon.

To register, please click here. Please send any questions to LegislativeConference@aap.org.
AAP Focuses on State of the Child During State of the Union Address

On Tuesday, President Barack Obama delivered his annual State of the Union address to Congress and the nation. During his remarks, the president focused on a range of domestic and international issues, and of importance to children and pediatricians, he outlined plans to make high-quality child care more affordable, provide paid sick leave to support families, offer community college free of charge and protect children from the dangers of climate change.

In response to the address, AAP President Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP, issued a statement welcoming the president’s investments in children and families, and calling for further action “to ensure that the state of our children is as strong as the state of our union.”

The Academy called on Congress and federal leaders to pass strong policies that invest in children, helping them to meet their most basic needs, including sound nutrition, nurturing relationships and safe environments.

The Academy also live-tweeted messages specific to children’s health from its handle @AmerAcadPeds using the hashtags #StateoftheChild and #SOTU. For more information on how you can get involved on social media, please see the “Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate” section below.

Pediatrician Discusses Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome During Congressional Briefing

On Wednesday, Jonathan Davis, MD, FAAP, (pictured left at podium) a neonatologist at The Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center, spoke at a congressional briefing titled, “Opioid Use: Protecting the Most Vulnerable.” The briefing, organized by the AAP along with the March of Dimes and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, is the first of the 114th Congress to address the prevalence, symptoms and possible treatment options for babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS).

In addition, Reps. Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) and Steve Stivers (R-Ohio) spoke at the briefing about the need for bipartisan congressional action to spur the development of better treatments for NAS. Both representatives were original cosponsors of the Coordinated Recovery Initiative for Babies (CRIB) Act (H.R. 4888) in the 113th Congress that would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to collect and disseminate information and best practices for treating mothers and newborns addicted to opioids. Both representatives plan to
reintroduce the CRIB Act in the 114th Congress. Dr. Davis also served as Rep. Clark’s guest at the president’s State of the Union address on Tuesday evening.

**AAP President-Elect Provides Perspective on Child Poverty**

Earlier this week, AAP President-Elect Benard Dreyer, MD, FAAP, offered remarks at an event hosted by The Century Foundation titled, “Child Poverty Solutions That Can Work.” Dr. Dreyer served on a panel that focused on treating child poverty and eliminating the health care gap that exists for poor children. In his remarks, Dr. Dreyer spoke about the role of Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for children and families in poverty. He advocated for extending the two-year Medicaid payment equity provision in the Affordable Care Act and funding for CHIP, and addressed the unique challenges facing immigrant families.

**Global Health Update**

*United Nations negotiations on Sustainable Development Goals*

On Jan. 16, Dr. Dreyer provided comments at a stakeholder discussion at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York City. The meeting was held as preparation for intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda that took place this week. Dr. Dreyer urged ambassadors to ensure that the needs of children and adolescents are taken into account, particularly within the proposed target for non-communicable diseases. The post-2015 agenda is meant to provide a set of global development targets, called the Sustainable Development Goals, to replace the UN’s Millennium Development Goals that sunset in 2015.

**Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate**

On the heels of the president’s State of the Union address, encourage your member of Congress to pass policies that ensure that the state of the child is as strong as the state of the union. Find your member of Congress on Twitter.

**Twitter:** Investing early in kids helps them reach their full potential [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], pass policies that help strengthen the #StateoftheChild

**Facebook:** Investing early in kids helps them reach their full potential. Pediatricians encourage our nation’s leaders to pass strong policies that improve the state of the child.

**What We’re Reading**

- A New York Times piece on the increase in the number of children eligible for free and reduced-price lunches
- An announcement from House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) on the committee’s oversight plan for the 114th Congress
- A Washington Post article, “Millions of children could lose their health insurance if Congress doesn’t act”
- A Medscape article, “Supreme Court dubious on right to sue over low Medicaid fees”
This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

Though the state of the union is strong
We could help move our country along
By focusing on what all children need
To give each one the chance to succeed:
Reducing poverty and expanding health care
Investing in all children everywhere
Keeping environments safe and relationships sound
Making sure in school meals that healthy foods abound
If legislation for these issues were filed,
It would help improve the state of the child

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
January 16, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:

- 2015 Legislative Conference: Register Today!
- AAP President Adds Child Health Context to New Findings on School Lunch
- House Takes Measures Impacting Children’s Health
- USDA Releases Updated CACFP Regulations
- AAP Sends Comments to Indian Health Service on Proposed Payment Changes
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

**2015 Legislative Conference: Register Today!**

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- Hear firsthand from distinguished guest speakers, such as members of Congress, White House officials and federal agency leaders
- Participate in meetings with congressional staff on Capitol Hill to urge elected officials to put children first in their federal policymaking
- Learn about federal policy priorities impacting children and pediatricians

For more information and to download the conference brochure, please visit [www.aap.org/legcon](http://www.aap.org/legcon).

**To register**, please click [here](http://www.aap.org/legcon). Please send any questions to LegislativeConference@aap.org.
AAP President Adds Child Health Context to New Findings on School Lunch

On Wednesday, AAP President Sandra G. Hassink, MD, FAAP, participated in a press telebriefing that came in conjunction with new findings from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) on participation in the National School Lunch Program.

During her remarks, Dr. Hassink shared the importance of child nutrition from an early age and how healthy school meals play a critical role in protecting students against unhealthy weight gain and its serious health consequences. Dr. Hassink also emphasized the need for Congress to implement the strongest nutritional criteria possible through this year’s reauthorization of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

“Good nutrition in childhood sets the stage for lifelong healthy eating,” said Dr. Hassink. “Strong nutrition criteria for school meals are an essential part of that foundation.”

House Takes Measures Impacting Children’s Health

House passes Homeland Security spending bill

On Wednesday, the House of Representatives passed a spending bill that would fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), while dismantling President Obama’s executive action on immigration. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 spending bill, known as the “CRomnibus,” lawmakers funded 11 of the 12 government agencies until September 2015. DHS was excluded from the initial appropriations package in an attempt to roll back immigration programs implemented by the president. Following passage of the bill in the House, the Academy issued a press statement, picked up by Washington, DC, beltway press, condemning the action and urging lawmakers to protect the health and well-being of all children.

It remains unclear whether the Senate will have the votes to pass the bill, but should it pass the legislation, a presidential veto is all but certain.

House targets social security in new rule

At the start of each new Congress, the House adopts new rules that will govern the body until the next Congress begins. Last week, the House convened and passed H.R. Res 5, which contains their rules for the upcoming Congress. This Congress’ rules included a provision regarding social security that will create barriers to transfers between the two trust funds of the Social Security Administration (SSA): Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Historically, Congress has maintained the ability to make transfers between the two accounts in order to ensure that benefits are paid out from both accounts on-time and as expected.

This process has been non-controversial and has taken place 11 times since social security’s creation. The new rule essentially bars these transfers between these accounts unless the amount is replaced with benefits cuts or revenue; this is problematic for the SSDI trust fund, because the account will not have enough
money to pay out benefits starting in December 2016, and SSDI recipients could see a benefit cut of 20%. The SSA estimates that about 4.4 million children receive approximately $2.5 billion each month in social security benefits (not including Supplemental Security Income (SSI)).

The AAP and a number of its partners in the disability community sent a letter to the House opposing the rule change. The letter discussed why the rule is problematic for social security beneficiaries, and also asks the House to allocate the appropriate amount of funds necessary for the program to pay out full benefits.

USDA Releases Updated CACFP Regulations

On Jan. 9, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a proposed rule with new science-based nutritional standards for meals provided through the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). CACFP provides millions of meals and snacks to children in day care, residing in emergency shelters and participating in afterschool programs as well as participants in adult day care programs.

The proposed meal patterns will help ensure that the more than 3 million children who receive meals through CACFP each day have access to healthy, balanced meals. This update to the food pattern, the first since 1968, proposes a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, as well as more whole grains and less sugar and fat. The proposed rule includes provisions that support and promote breastfeeding and improve access to healthy beverages, including water and low-fat and fat-free milk. These changes are based on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, scientific recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, and stakeholder input, including AAP clinical guidance.

In a press release announcing the proposed rule, the USDA called the update to the CACFP meal pattern critical to creating stronger community nutrition programs and continuing successful obesity prevention efforts.

The AAP intends to submit comments on the proposed rule, and will be working with members of Congress to strengthen the CACFP program during child nutrition reauthorization.

AAP Sends Comments to Indian Health Service on Proposed Payment Changes

On Wednesday, the AAP submitted comments in support of the Indian Health Service’s (IHS) proposed rule that would apply Medicare payment methods to all physician and other health care professional services and non-hospital-based services that IHS, tribal health programs, and urban Indian (I/T/U) health programs pay for with Purchased and Referred Care (PRC) program funds. PRC funding covers the expense of health services obtained outside of I/T/U health systems. These funds typically cover specialty and emergency care, and are generally expended before the end of each fiscal year, leaving many without access to care. Currently, I/T/Us reimburse for authorized services at the rates provided by contracts negotiated at the local level with individual providers or according to a provider’s billed charges.
The proposed rule would implement Medicare payment methods for these services, but would not require providers to accept the rates as a condition of Medicare participation. IHS already reimburses hospitals using Medicare payment methods. The Government Accountability Office estimates that this policy change would save $32 million just on physician services, and that doing so would also expand access to care. The Academy’s comments express support for the proposal as a means to improve the purchasing power of the PRC program, and also propose including an exception to ensure that lower rates do not prevent child access to care, based on specialty and geographic distance.

Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate

E-cigarettes pose a serious danger to children – if a child comes in contact with liquid nicotine, whether through ingestion or skin contact, the health consequences can be severe and even lethal. Tell your members of Congress to support legislation to require child-proof packaging for liquid nicotine. Find your member of Congress on Twitter.

Twitter: Liquid nicotine refills can be deadly for children. [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], please support regulations for #ecigs http://ow.ly/HrxFh

Facebook: One swallow of the liquid nicotine used to refill e-cigarettes can kill a child. Tighter regulations are needed to keep kids safe http://ow.ly/HrxFh

What We’re Reading

- A New York Times article on Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Marilyn Tavenner’s decision to step down from her position
- A piece published in The Hill on legislation to protect children from liquid nicotine poisonings
- An article on the new findings from FRAC on school lunch participation and the importance of healthy child nutrition
- An opinion piece by Gary A. Emmett, MD, FAAP, published on Philly.com’s Healthy Kids blog, “Why We Should be Worried by E-Cigarettes”

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

This spring in D.C.
Learn how to speak up for kids
Register today!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!
January 9, 2015

**Federal Legislative Update**

In this update:
- Welcome Back: A New Year, a New Congress
- **Breaking News!** Registration Open for 2015 Legislative Conference
- Pediatrician Testifies Before the CPSC on Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles
- Senate Reintroduces Legislation to Protect Children from Liquid Nicotine
- AAP Advocates for Access to High-Quality, Affordable Health Insurance
- Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate
- What We’re Reading
- This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

**Welcome Back: A New Year, a New Congress**

Happy 2015! In Washington, we are not only welcoming the start of a new year, but also a new Congress to Capitol Hill. This week, members of the 114th Congress took their offices, and as many of us chart resolutions or goals for the coming 365 days, federal legislators are doing the same.

As a reminder, as a result of the midterm elections in November, Republicans were able to gain control of the Senate for the first time since 2007 and increase their majority in the House, leaving the U.S. federal government with a split balance of power between a democratic White House and a republican Congress. A complete list of new members can be found [here](#).

The AAP News Washington Report column in the January issue also provides a breakdown of key committees and leadership to know as we move into the new Congress.

With numerous federal priorities up for consideration in 2015, much will be at stake for children’s health. Critical child nutrition programs will come under consideration with the *Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act* up for reauthorization. In addition, the AAP will be advocating for several priorities that were not addressed during the congressional lame duck session, including reauthorization of the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), extension of Medicaid payment equity and reintroduction of legislation to protect children from liquid nicotine poisonings.

As the new congressional session sets into full swing, please visit [federaladvocacy.aap.org](http://federaladvocacy.aap.org) for more information on timely federal child health issues and opportunities to take advocacy action.

**Upcoming Dates to Know:**
• On Jan. 20, President Barack Obama will deliver his State of the Union address
• On Feb. 2, the White House plans to unveil its Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 budget request

**Breaking News! Registration Open for 2015 Legislative Conference**

Come join us in Washington, DC, this spring to learn how you can become a strong advocate for children’s health! **Registration for the 2015 Legislative Conference**, taking place on April 12-14, 2015, is now open! With a new Congress in office and countless federal child health priorities at stake, there could not be a more critical time for medical students, residents and pediatricians to come together and speak up for children.

During the conference, participants will:

• Attend skills-building workshops in negotiation, social media and crafting effective messages
• Hear firsthand from distinguished guest speakers, such as members of Congress, White House officials and federal agency leaders
• Participate in meetings with congressional staff on Capitol Hill to urge elected officials to put children first in their federal policymaking
• Learn about federal policy priorities impacting children and pediatricians

For more information and to download the **conference brochure**, please visit [www.aap.org/legcon](http://www.aap.org/legcon).

*To register*, please click [here](http://www.aap.org/legcon). Please send any questions to LegislativeConference@aap.org.

**Pediatrician Testifies Before CPSC on Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles**

On Wednesday, Charles Jennissen, MD, FAAP, a member of the AAP Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention, testified before the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) about the agency’s proposed mandatory safety standards for Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles (ROVs). ROVs are motorized vehicles designed for off-highway use that have four or more tires, bench or bucket seating for two or more occupants, a steering wheel and maximum...
speeds of more than 30 miles per hour. ROVs pose many of the same child safety hazards as All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), including ejections and rollovers.

*Pictured left to right: Paul Vitrano (Polaris Industries), Nicole Gilles (American Sand Association), Dr. Jennissen and Charla Teeters (United Desert Gateway)*

There has been a voluntary safety standard in place for ROVs since 2008, but it is insufficient for the risks related to lateral stability, vehicle handling and occupant protection. The CPSC is pursuing this new mandatory standard in response to the inadequacies of the current voluntary standard. The proposed rule would mandate new safety standards for ROVs, including stability improvements and a limitation on speed when occupants are not wearing seat belts.

Dr. Jennissen addressed the importance of the CPSC’s proposed mandatory standards in protecting children, outlining the injury and fatality risks these vehicles pose to them. In discussing his research on the topic, Dr. Jennissen shared stories of patients he has cared for who have suffered from injuries caused by ROVs.

**Senate Reintroduces Legislation to Protect Children from Liquid Nicotine**

On Thursday, Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) reintroduced the AAP-supported, bipartisan *Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015* (S. 142) in the 114th Congress with 13 original cosponsors, including Sen. Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.). The bill, originally introduced in the 113th Congress last July, would direct the CPSC to require liquid nicotine containers sold to consumers be child-proof. Although unanimously approved by the Senate Commerce Committee last fall, the bill was not able to clear the full Senate before the end of last year and expired.

Reintroduction of the bill comes soon after the tragic death of a 1-year-old New York toddler in December who swallowed a lethal amount of liquid nicotine, which was the first child death reported in the United States as a result of liquid nicotine poisoning. The liquid nicotine container did not have a child-proof cap.

**AAP Advocates for Access to High-Quality, Affordable Health Insurance**

This week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee released its “End of Session Review” for the 113th Congress. In the policy preview for the 114th Congress, the committee noted that it will continue to address the expiring Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to ensure “states have better, more flexible options for helping vulnerable children.” During the 114th Congress, the Academy will continue advocating for a four year reauthorization of funding for CHIP.

Recently, the Academy submitted [individual comments](#) and [group comments](#) to the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission on the adequacy and affordability of CHIP and qualified health plans in insurance exchanges created under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In its comments, the AAP emphasized the affordability of CHIP and its wide scope of benefits designed specifically for children.
Spread the Word: Be a Social Media Advocate

Social media is an effective way to let your members of Congress know where you stand on key child health issues. Unless Congress acts, funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program runs out on October 1, 2015, which could cause millions of children to have their insurance coverage disrupted or lose access to affordable coverage altogether. Help spread the word on social media that CHIP is a critical program that helps provide essential health care services to children. Find your member of Congress on Twitter.

Twitter: As a pediatrician, every day I see how #CHIPworks to help keep kids healthy [insert your representative or senator’s handle here], please #ExtendCHIP

Facebook: The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) plays a critical role in keeping kids healthy in each and every state. Unless Congress acts, funding for CHIP will run out on Oct. 1, 2015. Help me spread the word that #CHIPworks for kids! [insert your representative or senator’s handle here] #ExtendCHIP

What We’re Reading

- An opinion piece published in The Washington Post by Ankoor Shah, MD, on homelessness in Washington, DC
- An article from Kaiser Health News, “As Docs Face Big Cuts in Medicaid Pay, Patients May Pay the Price”
- An op-ed published in the Jacksonville Daily News by David Myles, MD, FAAP, “Corporal punishment isn’t good way to raise a child”
- An article from Bloomberg Businessweek on Medicaid payment equity

This Week in Washington: Rhyming Recap

This week a new Congress arrived
With a legislative fervor revived
Mapping out a new policy agenda
That may or may not include referenda
On the President’s policy priorities
Given the new House and Senate majorities
But no matter which party’s in power,
No matter the day or the hour,
Along every step of the way
Pediatricians will still pave the way
With advocacy that garners results
For children are not just little adults

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter!