Children and their face many challenges today, but the pediatricians who care for them recognize opportunities for change. The AAP undertakes initiatives to support the work of its chapters and members in their quest to improve the lives of children and their families, and to advance the profession of pediatrics. This blueprint can help you build success in your state in the coming year.

Health Care System Transformation

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) was just the start of significant change in our health care system. States remain the true laboratories of health system transformation, experimenting with new delivery and payment models that often involve Medicaid as a change driver.

Supporting these efforts are State Innovation Model (SIM) grants from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI), which provide funding to states to design, test, and implement novel health delivery system and payment models. To date, 34 states and the District of Columbia have received SIM grants to further this work. Additionally, the use and expansion of telehealth care technology has the potential to transform how pediatricians practice medicine. This technology could serve to meet the needs of children, but direct-to-consumer technologies raise questions about safeguards of the medical home.

Issues Being Considered by States

- Ensuring that payment reforms and a move to value-based purchasing recognize the unique needs of, and provide support to, pediatrics.
- Guaranteeing that accountable care organization (ACO) models and larger integrated systems include pediatrician leadership.
- Ensuring that Medicaid reforms protect children.
- Payment for telehealth care services from Medicaid and private insurers.
- Establishment of the physician/patient relationship for the provision of telehealth.
- Interstate physician licensure.
- Prescribing via telehealth care.

AAP Resources

- State Health Care System Transformation
  [www.aap.org/systemtransformation](http://www.aap.org/systemtransformation)
- Practice Transformation at the AAP
  [www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-support/Pages/Practice-Transformation-at-the-AAP.aspx](http://www.aap.org/en-us/professional-resources/practice-support/Pages/Practice-Transformation-at-the-AAP.aspx)

Immunization Policy

State laws and regulations establish immunization requirements for public and private school and child care attendance. All states provide medical exemptions, and some state laws also offer exemptions for religious and/or philosophical reasons. States also establish mechanisms for enforcement of school vaccination requirements and exemptions.

Issues Being Considered by States

- Discouraging or prohibiting nonmedical exemptions to school entry immunization requirements.
- Making school vaccination rates publicly available.
- Adding new requirements (HPV, meningococcal for school students, pertussis and measles for children childcare workers).
- Creating new financing mechanisms for state purchased childhood and adolescent vaccines.
- Improving immunization rates and educating the public about vaccine preventable diseases.

AAP Resources

- State Advocacy FOCUS: Childhood Immunizations
- AAP State Advocacy Infographic: The State of Immunity
- AAP Immunization Initiatives
Mental Health Services—Access and Funding

Though most states have increased mental health funding in recent years, it has not returned to prerecession levels in many states. The ACA has increased the number of children and adults with health insurance coverage and some states have used this opportunity to cut community mental health services and other mental health safety net programs. Compounding these cuts, a shortage of child psychiatrists and other mental health professionals has made it difficult for children to access needed mental health services. Low Medicaid payment rates and network restrictions such as narrow networks or behavioral health carve-outs also make it difficult families to find mental health professionals who will accept their insurance.

Securing access to mental health services is critical to the health and well-being of children with mental health care needs.

Issues Being Considered by States
- Improving state mental health funding.
- Ensuring equitable payment for child psychiatrists who practice in underserved areas via telehealth care.
- Increasing Medicaid payment rates.

AAP Resources
- AAP Mental Health Initiatives

Opposing Recreational Marijuana Legalization

Recent changes in both state laws and technology have created an explosion of new and potentially health limiting marijuana based products that have unique impacts on adolescent brain development. Not surprisingly, adolescents and young adults are targeted in the marketing of newly legalized marijuana products. Holding ground in the effort to preserve clean indoor air and prevent lifelong substance abuse by countering efforts to legalize recreational marijuana use is a crucial advocacy objective.

Issues Being Considered by States
- Marketing of edible marijuana products that are attractive to the children.
- Childproof packaging of marijuana products.
- Protecting children from the effects of second- and third-hand marijuana smoke.

AAP Resources
- State AdvocacyFOCUS: Marijuana Legalization

Network Adequacy

The ACA continues to increase the number of Americans with insurance coverage, making access to necessary physicians more pressing. The AAP has worked with the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and other stakeholders to ensure children’s needs are addressed in model network adequacy language. Network adequacy will continue to play out as states regulate insurance products. This opportunity allows AAP chapters to advocate for inclusion of adequate networks of pediatric generalists, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists in insurance plans offered in states.

Issues Being Considered by States
- The use of quantitative measures to determine insurance network adequacy.
- Including sufficient numbers of pediatric generalists, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists to ensure that children, especially those with special health care needs, have access to needed expert pediatric care.
- Ensuring that insurance plan provider directories are accurate and up-to-date so consumers can make educated health insurance decisions.
- Guaranteeing appropriate review and approval of plan network adequacy by insurance commissioners.

AAP Guidance to NAIC
- October 2015 AAP Letter
- October 2015 Stakeholder Letter