EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Periodic Survey #58 –
PEDIATRICIANS’ EXPERIENCES WITH AND COUNSELING PRACTICES ON CHILD CARE HEALTH AND SAFETY, 1999 V 2004

The 2004 survey (PS#58) was initiated by the Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care (COECADC) & the Section on Community Pediatrics Early Education and Child Care Special Interest Group as a follow up to a 1999 survey (PS#41) assessing pediatricians’ experiences with child care issues. This survey was funded in part by an educational grant from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, Department of Health and Human Services (# U93 MC 00184), as part of the Pediatrics Collaborative Care (PedsCare) Program cooperative agreement.

Periodic Survey #58 was an eight-page self-administered questionnaire sent to 1,621 active (non-retired) United States members of the AAP. An original mailing and six follow-up mailings to recontact nonrespondents were conducted from December 2003 through June 2004; 877 questionnaires were received for a response rate of 54%. PS#41 was mailed to 1,619 members from November 1998 to March 1999; 900 questionnaires were received for a response rate of 56%. On both surveys, analysis of items addressing child care issues is based on respondents who provide patient care: 789 pediatricians in 2004 (89% of all respondents) and 789 pediatricians in 1999 (88% of all respondents).

I. COUNSELING ON CHILD CARE

- Most pediatricians in both survey years say they discuss how to evaluate potential or current child care settings with parents of young patients, however, reported discussion has declined somewhat over the years (81% in 2004 v 86% in 1999, p<.05).

- In 2004, more pediatricians say they are confident in their ability to respond to parents’ child care questions than so reported in 1999 (67% v 58%, p<.01).

- In both survey years, pediatricians were asked about the form of child care they would recommend to parents for the optimal development of their child, assuming all types of care were available, affordable and of high quality.
  - Fewer pediatricians in 2004 than in 1999 favor in-home care for infants (64% v 73%) and the percentage who say they have no preference has increased (11% v 6%) (p<.001).
  - Among children 1-3 years, in 2004, 29% would recommend family-based care compared to 44% in 1999; the percentage who say they have no preference has increased from 9% in 1999 to 18% in 2004 (p<.001).
  - In 2004, 51% of pediatricians recommend center-based care for 4-5 year olds compared to 56% in 1999; 23% say they have no preference in 2004 compared to 16% in 1999 (p<.001)

- The AAP Redbook remains the source of child care information with which pediatricians are most aware and most frequently use, although reported awareness and use have decreased somewhat since 1999 (aware: 82% in 2004 v 91% in 1999, p<.001) (use: 77% in 2004 v 91% in 1999, p<.001). However, reported use of the Healthy Child Care America publications has significantly increased over the years (46% in 2004 v 25% in 1999, p<.01).
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- In 2004 compared to 1999, fewer pediatricians report offering parents brochures and handouts on how to choose child care (27% v 32%, p<.05) and fewer pediatricians also report referring parents to a local child care resource/referral agency for information on child care (20% v 32%, p<.001).

II. COMMUNICATION WITH CHILD CARE PROVIDERS (CCP)

- Fewer pediatricians in 2004 than in 1999 say it is their policy to take all calls from CCPs (16% v 25%), whereas more pediatricians say they take calls only if parents give them the authority to do so (32% v 21%) (p<.001). A large proportion (>40%) of pediatricians in both surveys years say they have no set policy regarding calls from CCPs.

- In 2004, compared to 1999, fewer pediatricians say it is their policy to see all patients brought in by CCPs (16% v 21%), whereas more pediatricians say they see patients brought in by CCPs only if they have authority from the parents (50% v 40%) (p<.001). About one-third of pediatricians in both survey years have no set policy for this situation.

- Equal proportions of pediatricians in both survey years are confident that parents understand instructions when prescribing treatment and/or medications for a child who spends time in a child care setting during the course of that treatment (82% in 2004, 80% in 1999). However, in 2004, fewer pediatricians are certain the child’s treatment protocol will be followed (43% v 51%, p<.01); a large proportion of pediatricians in both survey years are unsure.

III. INVOLVEMENT WITH CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

- Fewer pediatricians in 2004 than in 1999 report offering telephone consultation to child care providers (36% v 48%, p<.001) and providing well child care services in the child care setting (6% v 9%, p<.05). There was no change over the years in other forms of reported involvement with child care programs.

- Lack of time (65% of pediatricians reporting in 2004, 61% in 1999) and uncertainty about how to get involved (33%, 34%) remain the most frequently named barriers to providing services or consultation to child care programs.

IV. EDUCATION/TRAINING IN CHILD CARE ISSUES

- Equally low numbers of pediatricians in both survey years (12% in each) recall lectures in medical school or residency on involvement in child care health and safety. The proportion of pediatricians who have attended any CME focusing on child care issues has decreased over the years from 24% in 1999 to 19% in 2004 (p<.01). The proportion who say they have read journal articles on becoming involved in child care issues has also declined from 43% in 1999 to 34% in 2004 (p<.001).

- While the majority of pediatricians in both survey years say they are interested in receiving further education that focuses on pediatricians' involvement in child care, the proportion of pediatricians who so report has declined over the years (54% in 2004 v 62% in 1999, p<.01).