

KANSAS



A State Child Health Policy Agenda 2020 and Beyond

Priorities and recommendations to foster child health and well-being, achieve health equity, eliminate health disparities, optimize lifespan outcomes, strengthen families, support our communities, and enhance the position of Kansas as a leading state for children.



Policy Goals

PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILDREN

All children, adolescents, and young adults from birth to the age of 26 years must have access to the highest-quality health care, so they can thrive throughout their lifespan. Policymakers must ensure that all children, regardless of their race, ethnicity, income, family composition or immigration status have:

- equitable, non-discriminatory access to affordable and high-quality health care coverage,
- insurance with comprehensive, pediatric-appropriate benefits,
- access to needed primary and subspecialty pediatric care and mental and behavioral health services,
- access to necessary COVID-19 services, supports, and treatments, and
- comprehensive, family-centered care in a physician led medical home.

PROMOTE SECURE FAMILIES

Together we can work to advance efforts to ensure that parents can give their children the best foundation for the future. Policymakers must ensure that all families have:

- work that provides a stable and adequate income and family-friendly benefits, including paid family medical and sick leave,
- safe, secure, and non-discriminatory housing,
- affordable and safe high-quality child-care,
- access to adequate, healthy, nutritious foods throughout the year, and
- resources to support family placement and permanency within the child welfare system.

PROMOTE STRONG COMMUNITIES

Strong communities are the building blocks for secure families and healthy children. Policymakers must ensure that communities:

- are safe from violence and environmental hazards,
- provide high-quality early education, especially in segregated urban, suburban, and rural communities,
- support public health systems that protect children from infectious diseases and support maternal and child health, and
- respond effectively when disasters and public health emergencies occur.

ENSURE OUR STATE IS A LEADER FOR CHILDREN

Child health and well-being must be elevated and maintained as a priority in our state. Policymakers must develop and implement policies that:

- acknowledge racism as a public health crisis and work toward reducing racism through interdisciplinary partnerships with organizations that have developed campaigns against racism,
- fund and support public health and health services to help children grow into healthy adults,
- address environmental health and climate change issues that affect children, and
- address factors that make some children more vulnerable than others, such as race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, and disability.

Advocacy Agenda

Kansas Chapter | American Academy of Pediatrics

VACCINATIONS

Immunizations have led to significant decreases in rates of vaccine-preventable diseases and have had an enormous impact on children's health. Routine childhood immunization is one of the crown achievements in public health over the past century. A 2013 New England Journal of Medicine study estimated that childhood vaccination programs have prevented 103.1 million cases of diphtheria, hepatitis A, measles, mumps, pertussis, polio and rubella since 1924. A 2005 Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine study estimated that for every dollar spent in the US, vaccination programs saved more than \$5 in direct costs and approximately \$11 in additional costs to society.

However, challenges remain. Outbreaks of measles, pertussis, Hib, and other vaccine preventable diseases are returning. Numerous factors—including the cost of acquiring and administering vaccines, an increasingly complex delivery system, as well as a small but growing number of parents who are forgoing vaccination for their children—put success in jeopardy.

KAAP supports policy that:

- Promotes all ACIP recommended vaccines delivered on schedule,
- Eliminates any economic barriers to access to immunizations,
- Increases vaccine confidence, and educates the public and key decision makers about the importance of routine child immunization and actively counters misinformation about vaccine safety and efficacy,
- Includes only medical exemptions for vaccinations.

TELEMEDICINE

Health care providers and patients relied on telehealth during the COVID-19 outbreak; now it needs to be sustained. Telemedicine provides both patients and health care providers with options that can contribute to positive patient outcomes, including, for example, chronic disease management, continued behavioral health services, and monitoring vulnerable patients. KAAP supports a policy that includes:

- Expanded reimbursement and parity in payment for select services,
- Broadened reimbursement for telephone visits and efficient communication that protects patient privacy,
- Relaxed rules for originating and distance sites,
- Protect access to quality care from the patients' medical home

MENTAL AND BEVAHIORAL HEALTH

The pandemic has been particularly difficult for adolescents and has highlighted important issues related to mental and behavioral health care of adolescents. Almost 1 in 5 children in the US meet diagnostic criteria for a mental health or substance abuse disorder with impaired functioning, yet only 10%-25% receive needed services. Enhanced access to out-patient mental and behavioral health services has been shown to substantially reduce psychiatric hospitalizations. Payment for assessment and treatment for mental and behavioral health problems must be adequate and comparable with payment for services addressing other medical illnesses.

- Support funding programs that address adolescent suicide including the 988 suicide hotline
- Support mental health payment parity

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- Support increasing access to pediatric mental health services
- Support policies that promote paying primary care clinicians for the mental and behavioral health services they provide.

FOSTER CARE

Children in the foster care system deserve quality, consistent health care. Currently there are many challenges that prevent children in the foster care system from getting the care they deserve. We support policies that include:

- A comprehensive health care coordination system for children in the foster care system
- Single Managed Care Provider for children in the foster care system
- Collaboration with health care providers to improve continuity of health care
- Expand efforts to ensure safe and supportive access to educational services with minimal disruption.

APRN Expansion of Practice

Nurse practitioners are an important part of a quality health care team. Nonphysician clinicians, including nurse practitioners, provide valuable contributions in delivering optimal pediatric care, but the expansion of scope of practice for nonphysician pediatric clinicians raises critical concerns. Physicians have between 12,000 and 16,000 hours of patient care during their training compared to between 500-720 hours for nurse practitioners. As a direct result of their extensive training and experience, pediatricians possess the broad range of competencies required to best assess and manage health issues in children. Pediatric illness runs the gamut from basic to complex, from common behavioral disorders to rare metabolic and genetic diseases. The pediatrician is the clinician most extensively educated in pediatric health care and has the depth and breadth of knowledge, skills, and experience to deliver optimal care to children. KAAP believes that pediatricians and NPs are not interchangeable in the delivery of pediatric health care.

The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics does not support policies that include:

- Independent practice for nurse practitioners without physician oversight and Board of Healing Arts regulatory oversight.

MEDICAID EXPANSION

Medicaid policies and procedures have a significant impact on the health of Kansas children. Parents with health insurance coverage are more likely to have children with coverage and are less likely to have breaks in their own coverage and more likely to remain insured. Medicaid expansion results in improved access to care, affordability of care, and financial security for low-income working families. Studies have shown improved health outcomes and self-reported health in expansion states. States that have expanded Medicaid have seen reductions in uncompensated care costs and fewer rural hospital closures as well as positive or neutral effects on employment and labor markets.

- Support expansion of Medicaid to increase access to health care.
- Oppose lifetime caps for coverage
- Oppose work requirements that create barriers to health care

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