

The Time is Now!

Health Care Reform Talking Points

With health care reform in full swing, the Fourth of July recess provides the perfect opportunity to meet with your members of Congress and discuss the importance of providing all children with the services they need and deserve. As pediatricians, you can speak to the consequences of uninsurance and inappropriate care for children. Despite your best efforts, currently the US does not fare well when compared to other countries. Congress needs to hear from you about the importance of caring for our nation's children. An investment in children is an investment in our nation's future. The life success of every child should be our highest national priority.

When talking to your members of Congress, please use the following talking points:

Access: All Children Must Have Access to Coverage

- Any mandate for coverage must require that all children have health insurance.
- Medicaid payment rates should be raised to parity with Medicare rates, as currently proposed by the House tri-committee bill.
- Incentives must be provided to bolster the pediatric subspecialty workforce, which currently suffers from major shortages. The AAP supports the pediatric workforce grants proposed in the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee's draft legislation.

Benefits: All Children Should Have Benefits That Meet Their Unique Needs

- Children should have coverage for comprehensive well-child services and immunizations without cost sharing or copayments, as defined by the Senate HELP Committee draft legislation.
- All health plans offered through a new "gateway" or "exchange" structure should be required to cover maternity and pediatric services, as specified by the Senate Finance Committee.
- All medically necessary services for children should be exempt from any newly-established benefits advisory council (Senate proposed Medical Advisory Council or House proposed Health Benefits Advisory Committee). A benefits council structure without adequate pediatrician membership will shortchange children.

Quality: Children Deserve High Quality Care

- All children should have a medical home. The AAP strongly supports the Medicaid medical home demonstration project proposed in the House bill.
- Specific attention must be paid to pediatric quality measurement; measures designed for Medicare patients will not work for children.