



Oklahoma Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics
INCORPORATED IN OKLAHOMA



OKAAP MARCH/APRIL 2023

OK Pediatrician

A Message from Your Chapter President



Eve Switzer, MD | OKAAP

Dear Colleagues,

Spring has arrived! Although I love the return to nicer weather and beautiful blooms, Spring usually means an active legislative session, and a lot more going on for the OKAAP Chapter. This year is no exception.

Although we're not contending with a ton of anti-vaccine legislation this year, there are multiple issues that the Chapter is focusing on right now. Following a well-attended Coding Webinar hosted by OKAAP in February, we've turned our attention to state-wide matters that may affect Oklahoma pediatricians and our patients.

OKSHINE. There's been a lot of chatter about Oklahoma's health information exchange (HIE) and the requirement for all healthcare providers to submit electronic health data to My Health, the state's designated HIE, by July 1, 2023. For those who are like me, in independent general pediatric practice, this requirement will be both onerous and expensive.

As legislators continue to discuss and amend this unfunded mandate, our practice has requested an exemption and I encourage all pediatricians who are affected by this mandate to do the same. Please visit: <https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/okshine/overview.html> and complete an exemption request form. At this point in time, I am told that simply requesting an exemption will bring your practice into compliance once July 1st rolls around.

SoonerCare (Medicaid) Unwinding. With the end of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, SoonerCare will now be resuming the reviewing of eligibility and our patients may start losing their Medicaid coverage over the next 14 months. In Oklahoma, this process began in February. The AAP has been very involved with this issue and its effect on children and has an up-to-date resource page: <https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/health-care-access-coverage/preserving-medicare-and-chip-coverage/> which includes state-specific guidelines.

My practice, which sees >50% SoonerCare patients, will be having a team meeting to discuss this unwinding process, posting notices to remind our SoonerCare parents to update their contact information at <https://oklahoma.gov/ohca/individuals/mysoonerare.html>, and sharing this information on our website.

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A Message from President, Cont.

MARCH/APRIL 2023

There are multiple other issues that the Chapter is either involved in or monitoring and we'll try to keep you updated with any major changes as they appear.

Finally, this will be my last President's Letter as my interim year as Oklahoma Chapter President winds down. We're so lucky to have a stellar line up of Pediatricians who will be taking over as Chapter Officers next month: Marny Dunlap as President, Ashley Weedn, as Vice President, and Townsend Cooper as Secretary-Treasurer. In April, we'll be asking Chapter members to approve this slate of officers as well as a few Bylaws changes. I look forward to continuing as the Immediate Past President of the Chapter and to lend a hand wherever needed.

I saw a patient in clinic last week in one of my newly decorated exam rooms (long story why it wasn't already decorated). My exam room has an alphabet theme and includes floating book shelves with books that I found at our local thrift stores. I was delighted to give a copy of one of my favorite books by Laura Ingalls Wilder – Little House on the Prairie – to a patient of mine who, like me, is a middle child. So I'll end with a quote from Laura: "Some old-fashioned things like fresh air and sunshine are hard to beat."

Thanks for all you do caring for Oklahoma children and don't forget to also take care of yourselves by taking some time to get outside and enjoy the nicer weather and sun.

Eve Switzer, MD | OKAAP

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CONNECTED**



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Get FREE Materials for Your Office

Talk to your patients about quitting tobacco and recommend the Helpline.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline has FREE materials such as pens, brochures and badge reels to help start the conversation with your patients.

To order materials, visit [OKhelpline.com/Order](https://www.okhelpline.com/Order).



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You're Invited

ALL MEMBER MEETING

FRIDAY, MAY 12TH
9:00 AM

WHERE

OU SAMIS EDUCATION CENTER
1200 CHILDREN'S AVENUE OKC 73104



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REVIEW AND VOTE ON THE PROPOSED CHAPTER BYLAWS

[Click Here to View](#)

DISCUSS FUTURE INITIATIVES OF THE OKAAP
MEET WITH YOUR OKAAP CHAPTER LEADERS



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Breastfeeding Update

MARCH/APRIL 2023

Madlinda Webb, MD

OKAAP Chapter Breastfeeding Coordinator

The 11th annual Becoming Baby Friendly in Oklahoma Summit was held February 24. This conference is hosted by the Oklahoma Breastfeeding Resource Center with funding provided by the Oklahoma Department of Health as well as TSET. This was well attended by participants from around the state. The State of the State regarding breastfeeding is presented as well as presentations from nationally known speakers on lactation or pregnancy and delivery care.

Breastfeeding rates in OK had gone down for babies born in 2019—we have an initiation rate of 84.5%, but then fall to 47.9% and 35.9% for any breastfeeding at 6 and 12 months respectively. Exclusive breastfeeding at 3 months is 43.1%. 2019 is the latest data reported in 2022. This is a low sample size and is based on recall. The initiation rate is more accurate, based on birth certificate data from the hospitals, I believe. Rates continue to be low for non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics, yet infant mortality is highest in these groups. 36% of babies are born in Baby Friendly Hospitals in Oklahoma. We are above the national average in this category, now with 11 hospitals that have achieved Baby Friendly designation. According to PRAMS (OK Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) data, initiation rates of breastfeeding among mothers of preterm infants in Oklahoma was as high as term infants or higher, but was not as well sustained to 8 weeks. This also showed that younger mothers (<20) initiated breastfeeding or providing breastmilk at higher rates, but stopped sooner than older mothers. These data show that must provide new ways to support some groups of mothers.

The Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank has moved and is now housed in Garrison Tower on the OU Health Sciences Campus. The number of ounces of pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM) continues to rise, surpassing 140,000 in 2022. This is from over 250 donors. We have 32 established donor depots that are not all in-state. PDHM is now covered by Medicaid in a home setting. There are set guidelines and it requires a physician order. Since first getting approval, 16 outpatients have received 1500 ounces. Please check out their website www.okmilkbank.org.

Dr. Sarah Taylor, a neonatologist and researcher in human milk from Yale University, spoke about the importance of human milk for preterm infants. She also presented “overcoming NICU admission to achieve the family’s feeding goals.” I will spend more time on this in another article, but the important message is to get these mothers pumping as soon as possible after delivery so that they will have adequate precious nutrition for their infant.

Jarold “Tom” Johnston has a Doctorate in Nursing. He is a midwife, a lactation consultant and the father of 8. He gave an important talk on maternal substance use disorder and nonpharmacologic management of neonatal abstinence syndrome including breastfeeding. His talk was a reminder of the many factors that cause one to start using—usually by age 14-15—and the many barriers in the way of recovery. Our biases and judgment often make the situation worse. Eat, Sleep and Console has been shown to be more effective with lower costs than the Finnegan method of assessing and managing these babies.



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Breastfeeding Coordinator Update, Cont.

MARCH/APRIL 2023

Madlinda Webb, MD

Dr. Johnston also presented a very poignant and funny discussion of the role of the father in breastfeeding and delivery. We need to remember that fathers are not just bystanders and must be included in the entire birthing and postpartum experience. They want to help make it successful, including breastfeeding. I found it very sobering that more fathers reported negative rather than positive hospital birthing experiences.

Good Oklahoma news reported during the day was that Sooner Care has expanded coverage for pregnancy and postpartum care. The income requirement has increased and services expanded and include a full year of postpartum care. Doula services will also be covered as of July if ordered by provider. This will not cover home births.

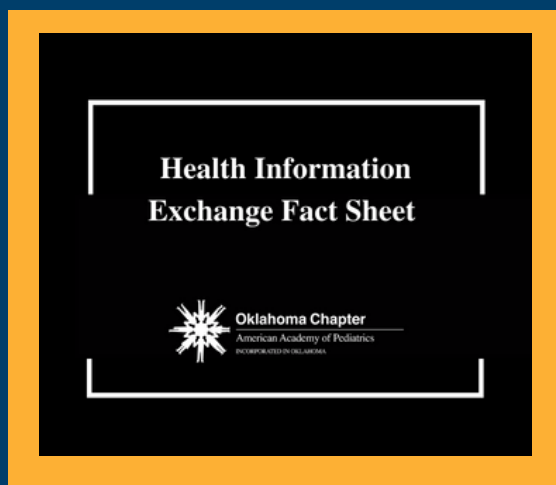
Oklahoma legislation related to breastfeeding includes SB 183 Medicaid incentive to become a Baby Friendly Hospital and SB 182 Medicaid funding for breast pumps sponsored by Senator Hicks. SB 401 would allow lactating foster care providers to breastfeed a child with certain consent. This is sponsored by Senator Dossett. Sponsored by Sen. Gavin is SB 990 that would create the Ok. Paid Family Leave Program. The legislators need to hear from us to help them make the best decisions for our patients.

**For More Information [CLICK HERE](#)
to Email Dr. Malinda Webb**

Health Information Exchange Fact Sheet

Health information exchanges (HIEs) are connecting nationwide to seamlessly deliver patient health information across health systems, improving the patient experience by making their health information available whenever and wherever their care occurs.

Click Below to Download Report



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MEDICAID CHANGES ARE COMING

How Pediatricians Can Help Children Stay Covered



Background

Since the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) in 2020, states have kept all individuals with Medicaid enrolled in exchange for enhanced federal funds. Now, states are redetermining eligibility for all 90+ million Medicaid enrollees. States have the option to begin this process — called “the unwinding” — in February, March, or April of 2023, and have up to 14 months to complete the process. This means that individuals could be disenrolled beginning April 1, 2023.

The Concern for Pediatric Patients

As many as 5.3 million children may lose their Medicaid coverage during this redetermination process; 3.8 million of these losses are expected to be due to “procedural” reasons (i.e., enrollees cannot be reached or did not return re-enrollment forms). All Medicaid-enrolled patients must:

1

Update their contact information with the state Medicaid agency and/or Medicaid managed care plan;

2

Be on the lookout for official notices from the state;

3

Promptly complete and return any forms requested by the state; and

4

Know that other affordable coverage options may be available should they lose coverage.

Enrollees who are no longer eligible for Medicaid may still be eligible for a Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) plan or a subsidized Marketplace plan.

An Unprecedented Challenge

AAP and its partners will continue to support its members in managing the administrative, operational, and payment-related challenges that pediatric practices face in this process, while ensuring that patients retain their coverage.

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Key Roles for Pediatricians, Pediatric Practices, and AAP Chapters

Prepare Your Practice to Help Patients

- Ensure that your practice staff understand the implications of the unwinding for patients.
- Work with your **state AAP chapter** to identify all options for patients to report contact information. See this [up-to-date list](#) of state options for reporting information.
- Work with [managed care organizations \(MCOs\) in your state](#) to verify and update contact information.
- Get copies of official state notices so staff can be familiar with what's being communicated to patients.
- Educate other stakeholders about the potential impact of the unwinding.

Amplify Key Communications

- Remind patients to update their contact information, be on the lookout for official communications from the state, and return any necessary forms:
 - Post or hand out informative flyers [such as the ones created by AAP and the Georgetown Center for Children and Families](#), as well as links to states' official communications toolkits (if available). Your state AAP chapter may have its own customized materials.
 - Update office automated messages or voicemail to include reminders.
 - Include reminders in patient communications (e.g., newsletters, patient portals, websites).
 - Offer a phone, tablet, or internet access for patients to update their contact information while in your office.

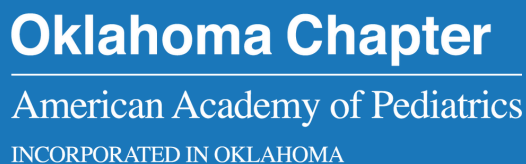
Refer Patients to Assistance Resources

- Help patients who lose coverage understand the options for re-enrolling or transitioning:
 - Patients who lose coverage because they did not respond can submit the needed information during the 90-day reconsideration period without re-applying.
 - Patients who are no longer eligible for Medicaid may still be eligible for a CHIP or Marketplace plan. The state should transfer ineligible patients to one of these two options.
 - If the patient is not eligible for Medicaid or CHIP, they may enroll in a Marketplace plan through July 2024 without waiting for an open enrollment period.
- [Work with your AAP chapter](#) to identify and partner with consumer assistance resources (state call centers and eligibility offices; navigators; certified application counselors; enrollment counselors in community health centers and hospitals) and community partners (schools; WIC offices; community centers; immigrant services).

Assist in Monitoring the Unwinding, Providing Feedback, and Participating in Advocacy

- Track themes and recurring problems reported by patients:
 - Are patients experiencing unreasonable call center wait times?
 - Are many patients losing coverage suddenly? Are they aware that they have lost coverage?
 - Are there other barriers, bottlenecks, and system issues?
- Work with [your state AAP chapter](#) and partners to consolidate feedback to the state.
- Connect patients who are willing to share their experience with advocacy groups collecting stories. Be willing to talk with the media about what patients in your practice are experiencing.





National Conference & Advocacy Day

MARCH/APRIL 2023

Registration Open for Members

May 2, 2023 (Open to All May 9, 2023)

The 2023 AAP National Conference & Exhibition will take place on October 20-24, in Washington, DC. This premier event gives you the opportunity to engage in thought-provoking education sessions, attend exciting special events, and visit the exhibit hall featuring the latest and greatest in pediatric technology. Registration and hotel reservations will open for AAP members on May 2 and open for all on May 9. The conference schedule will also be released on May 2. For more information, visit AAPexperience.org.



Resident Advocacy Day at the Oklahoma State Capitol

