

Director's Log

March 19, 2006

This Director's Log is sent to you from the desk of Kris Calvin, Executive Director of the American Academy of Pediatrics, California District (AAP-CA.)

The District is a joint venture of the four AAP-CA regional Chapters, providing a strong, unified voice for pediatricians in Sacramento on state government issues since 1985.

For questions or comments about anything in this report, please contact Kris at AAPCALIFORNIA@AOL.COM or call 510-559-8383.

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1. AAP-CA calls for 15% increase for Physician Reimbursement under Medi-Cal

AAP-CA is a founding member of Californians United for Quality Care (CUQC). This coalition of provider and patient groups led by the California Medical Association has been instrumental in fighting to protect and expand Medi-Cal access by opposing reimbursement cuts to physicians under Medi-Cal.

CUQH is embarking on a new Coalition initiative to advocate for a 15% reimbursement increase to compensate for the inflation that has effectively reduced Medi-Cal provider payments and thus access to care in recent years.

CUQH Coalition members, including the AAP-CA, are beginning meetings with legislators to advise them of the urgent need for action on physician reimbursement to repair an eroding health care system for California's most vulnerable children. Please watch in future Updates for ways that you can help. We anticipate developing and making available to you Fact Sheets and other materials for meetings with your local legislators. (Note: Residents can be a great help in this effort.)

2. AAP-CA Takes Positions on New Legislation of Importance to Children and Pediatricians

AAP-CA has taken the following positions on new bills of importance to children and pediatricians. (Note: These are in bill number order, not in order of priority.)

Chapters and individual pediatricians may advocate on behalf of the AAP-CA consistent with these positions. Go to assembly.ca.gov or senate.ca.gov to see the bill text and to find contact information for the author of the bill or for your own legislator. If you see an issue of particular importance to you, please call, email or fax your legislator!

Please watch these Updates for additional new AAP-CA bill positions as they are developed.

AB 606 (Levine) AAP-CA supports this bill to specify and clarify requirements for school districts to comply with current law regarding anti-discrimination and harassment prohibitions, relative to race and ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion and sexual orientation.

AB 1945 (Coto) AAP-CA supports this bill to address the continuity of medical care for youth exiting juvenile detention facilities by assuring that, whenever possible, eligible non-insured youth are enrolled in appropriate need-based health insurance coverage upon their release into the community.

AB 2651 (Jones) AAP-CA supports this March of Dimes-led bill to expand the existing Newborn and Infant Hearing Screening, Tracking and Intervention Act beyond CCS-approved general acute care hospitals to cover every birthing center, clinic, and general acute hospital with licensed perinatal services.

SB 162 (Ortiz) AAP-CA supports this bill to establish a separate Department of Public Health under the State Health and Human Services Agency. Functions relating to public health including, but not limited to maternal, child and adolescent health, communicable disease prevention and control, environmental health, and provisions of law relating to local health officers would be moved out of the Department of Health Service and put into the new Department of Public Health, under a licensed physician appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate.

SCR 67(Speier) AAP-CA supports this resolution to proclaim April 16-22, 2006 as Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness week in California to commend those advocates, organizations and agencies of the State that work to educate parents and caregivers about the causes, consequences and prevention of SBS.

3. AAP-CA Participates in WIC Early Obesity Prevention Forum

Dr. Michael Weiss (Chapter 4), Dr. Christine Wood (Chapter 3), Dr. Lydia Tinajero-Deck (Chapter One) and

Dr. Ulfat Shaikh (Chapter One) represented the AAP-CA at an early childhood obesity prevention forum in Sacramento on February 2nd hosted by the California WIC program.

According to a post-forum report submitted by Dr. Weiss, the purpose of the meeting was to initiate a dialogue among advocates and experts interested in collaborative efforts to prevent overweight among our youngest (0-5) and most vulnerable children. To that end, a short survey was sent to invitees to identify key environmental issues that contribute to early childhood overweight and subsequent obesity. These issues served as the topics of discussion for the day. In addition, attendees were asked to identify opportunities and potential barriers to addressing the issues. Key issues identified include direct marketing of food products to children; limited opportunities for physical activity; lack of access to healthier food choices; and lack of access to health care services. Key opportunities identified include growing concern about overweight among children and adolescents; research supporting association among diet, activity,

and overweight in children; policy makers supportive of efforts to protect children; and the Governor's recent Obesity Prevention Summit and related activities. Key barriers identified include industry money and influence; cultural norms for sedentary lifestyle and poor diet; current focus on school based programs that do not serve youngest kids; that it is less known what works for younger children; and lack of coordinated efforts. Discussion followed to develop a focus and strategies for solutions. The intent is for this meeting to serve as a launching point for further work in this area. For more information, including a copy of Dr. Weiss' 2-page report on the meeting on behalf of the AAP-CA team, please contact me at AAPCALIFORNIA@AOL.COM