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Pediatric Leadership Alliance curriculum available online to all AAP members

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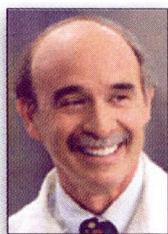
For three days in November, AAP chapter vice presidents came together with members of the Board of Directors to assess and improve their leadership skills.

This was the third in a series of leadership programs produced by the Pediatric Leadership Alliance (PLA). The first program, offered in 2002, brought 15 multidisciplinary teams together to solve problems in their communities and/or health care organizations. The 2003 course focused on young pediatricians' leadership development needs.

Chapter vice presidents were selected for the 2004 course to further improve AAP leadership presence in the states and communities where they serve, and to provide a leadership curriculum and tool kit that can be passed along to other chapter leaders.

Based on recent focus groups with chapter leaders, this skill set is a high priority. Access to this type of leadership education and skill building has become an increasingly popular, and essential, benefit of AAP membership.

The PLA is a partnership between the Academy and the Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute LLC that aims to explore and pilot innovations in pediatric education.



Dr. Friedman

"It occurred to us at a steering committee meeting three years ago that physicians have little formal exposure to topics such as leadership, and it was a topic the Academy had little experience in presenting," said PLA Steering Committee Chair Aaron L. Friedman, M.D., FAAP. "Providing the foundation and tools to help Academy members succeed as leaders seemed a natural fit across the board and a very important member benefit for the Academy to provide."

"To succeed today, the skill sets are different than the past," Dr. Friedman continued. "Physicians must master the skills of working and leading teams, and thinking about systems — how they operate and their role in them."

The PLA curriculum operates from a "bullseye" model, centered first on the leadership potential and skills within each individual. The curriculum builds to include skill building on teams, system thinking and analysis, and ultimately, how to apply this knowledge in the communities where members live and work.

The model that forms the core of the curriculum draws from one of the most researched models of

leadership published in 1995 by Harvard researchers James Kouzes and Barry Posner in "The Leadership Challenge." Kouzes and Posner discovered after thousands of interviews that America's most successful leaders appear to engage consistently in five primary behaviors:

- challenge the process,
- inspire a shared vision,
- enable others to act,
- model the way, and
- encourage the heart.

After covering the basics of this model, participants in the PLA program apply their knowledge to case studies drawn from real-life scenarios. A unique aspect of this experience is the research focus on physician behavior change. Each participant is required to develop, sign and fulfill a "learning contract" that affirms his or her commitment to make behavior change.

An article authored by AAP and PLA Steering Committee members Laurel Leslie, M.D., FAAP, Mary Beth Miotto, M.D., FAAP, Gil Liu, M.D., FAAP, and Antonio Cabrera, M.D., titled "Training Young Physicians As Pediatric Leaders for the 21st Century," recently was accepted for publication in *Pediatrics*. The article reports that 87% of the attendees of the young physician leadership program reported fully or partially achieving a leadership-related goal identified in a behavior change contract developed during the program.

Theresa Murdock-Vlautin, M.D., attended the 2003 course and made a commitment in her learning contract to bring leadership education and skill building to members of the AAP Resident Section. She went on to be elected 2004-'05 chair of the Resident Section, has established a leadership column in the section's newsletter, planned leadership education programs in the 2004 and 2005 Resident Section program at the

AAP National Conference & Exhibition (NCE), and is making sure that leadership stays a priority within the Resident

Section executive committee.

Providing a pathway for all AAP members to access high-quality leadership education has been a priority for the PLA. After two years in development, an online PediaLink module covering the leadership curriculum was launched at the 2004 NCE in San Francisco. By visiting www.pedialink.org, all AAP members can access the "best of the PLA" online.

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— Aaron L. Friedman, M.D., FAAP
Pediatric Leadership Alliance Steering Committee chair