

AAP

NEWS

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY

American Academy of Pediatrics
141 Northwest Point Blvd. • Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

AAP News, the official newsmagazine of the American Academy of Pediatrics, is dedicated to informing, educating and inspiring readers on matters related to pediatric health care.

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FOR YOUR BENEFIT

Members value Academy's benefits

from the AAP Department of Membership

The 2004 AAP National Conference & Exhibition (NCE) was a flurry of activity. The AAP Resource Center was busy all three days answering member and customer questions about AAP services and products. The Department of Membership staff was especially busy this year managing multiple meetings and staffing two information booths.

Membership added a booth to the on-site registration area this year. At the previous two NCE meetings, we recognized a need for members to have access to a Membership staff person prior to registering on-site. Some members wanted to reactivate their membership, others needed to change their status and still others joined the Academy for the first time. Members also needed their address and contact information corrected so their badges would scan properly in the exhibition booths. All these things and more were accomplished prior to on-site registration, resulting in lower registration fees for our members.

Another benefit of the second Membership booth was the increase in casual conversations Membership staff had with members in the Resource Center. Through these conversations, we learned that members truly value their AAP membership. The Academy provides professional support and resources to pediatricians from their early years of residency through the years of practicing in the United States and abroad.

"The AAP has been my chief resource for information about career planning, patient education, fellowship opportunities, the diversity of career options in pediatrics, and has also worked for decades to better the lives of our children and has helped make medical care easier, better rewarded and even more of a joy," said Jennifer Baird-Humberson, M.D., Resident Fellow from Clovis, Calif.

Douglas Gregory, M.D., FAAP, of Suffolk, Va., said, "The AAP is the most outstanding professional organization to which I have ever belonged. The benefits of membership are exceptional. From the educational materials to practice management and advocacy, there is no finer organization than the AAP. Every pediatrician should belong!"

Sean Bullen, M.D., FAAP, Corresponding Fellow from

Barbados, said, "The AAP remains the main source provider of continuing medical education, especially since I live outside the U.S. where (current) medical literature is difficult to access. I also feel connected to a global community of pediatricians with a common goal of better health care for kids."

Dr. Bullen was one of several international physicians who stopped by the Membership booth. Each one expressed pleasure in being at the NCE and appreciation for all the Academy does for children around the world. International members especially value the educational products and services the Academy provides.

Javier Ferreyros, M.D., FAAP, from Lima, Peru, said, "Thanks to the AAP, I can keep updated with the best care for my patients. Even practicing in a different country, being a member of the AAP makes me feel I do my best for my patients."

Jose Martinez-Alvarez, M.D., from Monterrey, Mexico, said, "As an International Fellow of the AAP, I have had the opportunity to stay in contact with other international pediatric practitioners and share experiences related with child care. Also, I have the chance to receive state-of-the-art information using all the Academy channels. Now I'm sure that being an International AAP Fellow is a great experience."

Under the new International Fellow program, these members receive online access to *Pediatrics*, *AAP News* and the *Red Book*. These educational resources are vital to keeping international members up to date on pediatric research, policy and guidelines.

In addition, International Fellows receive a certificate of membership to display. Their pride in belonging to the Academy is evident in the importance they place on this certificate. Since this program was launched in July 2004, more than 300 international members have paid for this expanded benefit program.

The benefits of membership are undergoing an extensive evaluation this year. A member needs assessment survey was conducted in October, and many focus groups were held at the NCE. The input from these efforts will shape the member category and benefit structure for the coming years. The AAP is committed to providing the best in pediatric information and service.

Deadline approaching to file claims for CIGNA settlement

from the AAP Division of Health Care Finance and Practice

CIGNA has agreed to settle the class-action lawsuits filed against it and many other health plans. Even physicians who do not have any CIGNA claims can benefit, but the deadline to act is coming soon.

Under terms of the CIGNA settlement, any physician who is a class-action member and who did not opt out of the settlement agreement may file a claim. The deadline for filing a claim is Feb. 18, 2005. The settlement allows physicians to be compensated if claims were submitted to any of the following carriers from Aug. 4, 1990, through Sept. 5, 2003: Aetna, Anthem, CIGNA, Coventry, HealthNet, Humana, Pacificare, Prudential, United Healthcare and Wellpoint.

Physicians have two filing options, and separate funds have been established for each option.

The Category A Settlement Fund is designed for those with few or no CIGNA claims. This fund totals \$30 million and will be divided among all class members who select

this option. After the filing period deadline, the Category A share will be calculated based on the total number of physicians filing.

The Claim Distribution Fund has the potential for a greater amount of monetary recovery for physicians with substantial denials or payment reductions by CIGNA due to its claims coding, bundling edits or adverse medical necessity determinations. Unlike the Category A Fund, the Claim Distribution Fund is uncapped. Physicians are required to submit claims documentation under the Claim Distribution Fund.

Vendors such as the Managed Care Advisory Group (www.mcaginc.com) will assist physician practices in filing CIGNA settlement claims. For additional information on filing claims, visit www.cignaphysicianssettlement.com/.

Physicians are strongly encouraged to file claims to either CIGNA settlement fund prior to the Feb. 18 deadline.