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# AAP News

**Breaking News**

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Letter from the President

## Join conversation on why Medicaid matters for children



Dr. McInerney

As of Jan. 1, the federal government will fund a historic increase in Medicaid payment rates to at least those of Medicare for immunization administration and primary care services. The two-year increase should improve access to care for children from low-income families and for children with special health care needs.

While the payment increase demonstrates a significant federal commitment to strengthen Medicaid, the program must overcome other threats if it is to remain the largest and most comprehensive source of health care coverage for our nation's most vulnerable children. Medicaid often is first on the chopping block when federal legislators are looking to reduce spending.

Pediatricians care for more Medicaid patients than other primary care physicians, with an average of 30% of our patients being covered by Medicaid. Therefore, we understand the value of this program in providing a lifeline of support to the 32 million U.S. children who rely on Medicaid for care. As Medicaid provisions of the Affordable Care Act are implemented this year and next, pediatricians and other physicians who treat Medicaid patients will have to work hard to ensure that these provisions remain intact.

The Academy is leading the charge to keep Medicaid strong through its Medicaid Matters for Children campaign. Part of this effort to promote the value of Medicaid is education through social media. Each Monday in January, the Academy will post messages on Twitter using the hashtag #MedicaidMonday and on Facebook. I will be participating from my Twitter handle @AAPPres, and I urge you to join the conversation at [www.twitter.com/#medicaid-monday](http://www.twitter.com/#medicaid-monday) and [www.facebook.com/aapfederalaffairs](http://www.facebook.com/aapfederalaffairs).

The Academy also conducted and participated in several phone

calls and webinars last month to explain the Medicaid payment increase to our members. You can learn more by visiting [www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/federal-advocacy](http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/federal-advocacy) and [www.aap.org/MedicaidPaymentIncrease](http://www.aap.org/MedicaidPaymentIncrease) (login required).

The payment increase is a historic recognition by the federal government that children in Medicaid should be valued the same as adults in Medicare for identical primary care services, and hopefully will serve as the first step to make the increase a permanent part of the law.

The Academy also is urging pediatricians to work with their chapters to consider expanding the Medicaid program as part of health reform implementation. In its June 2012 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court gave states the choice of whether to expand Medicaid to individuals with incomes up to 133% of the poverty line. During the AAP Committee on Federal Government Affairs meeting in Washington last month, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Deputy Administrator Cindy Mann, J.D., called states' choice "one of the single most important health care decisions of the time."

To learn more about where your state stands in its decision to expand Medicaid, I urge you to reach out to your state chapter: [www2.aap.org/member/chapters/chaplist.cfm](http://www2.aap.org/member/chapters/chaplist.cfm).

Whether writing to your federal legislators (visit <http://federal-advocacy.aap.org> for contact information), writing a letter to the editor of your local paper about the importance of Medicaid in your state or tweeting a fact about how Medicaid makes a difference for children, I hope you will join me this month in the Academy's efforts to explain why Medicaid matters for children.

*Thomas K. McInerney, M.D., FAAP  
President, American Academy of Pediatrics*