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First pediatrician elected to Congress

by Melissa Jenco, News Content Editor

A pediatrician will be serving in Congress for the first time next year.

Washington state voters elected Kimberly Schrier, M.D., FAAP, to the U.S. House of Representatives. Dr. Schrier has been working as a pediatrician with Virginia Mason, serving the Issaquah, Wash. area for the past 16 years.

"I love my job and my patients, and never thought I would do anything else," she said on her [campaign website](#). "But the last election and the utter failure of this Congress to provide checks and balances, or to work together on just about anything has compelled me to step up."

Dr. Schrier was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes as a teenager, leading her to become a pediatrician and giving her insight into the patient experience.

"I know firsthand what it means to worry about health insurance and rising costs," she said.

She has proposed giving everyone an option to participate in Medicare and eventually, she'd like to see Medicare for all. She also laid out plans for stabilizing the Affordable Care Act, protecting people with pre-existing conditions, lowering prescription drug prices, tackling the opioid epidemic and improving rural care.

There has never been a pediatrician in Congress, and there are no other female doctors serving currently.

"I will bring a missing voice because we can do so much better," Dr. Schrier said in an [online video](#). "Because we can live in a country where no family faces bankruptcy because of medical costs. We can live in a country where nobody has to choose between paying their mortgage or paying their premiums. We can live in a country where no parent has to think twice before they take their child to the doctor because it might be too expensive. We can get affordable health care for every person in this country. We just have to decide to do it."

AAP President Colleen A. Kraft, M.D., M.B.A., FAAP, congratulated Dr. Schrier in a letter Thursday and said she looks forward to partnering on children's health issues.

"One of the most vital roles we can take on as pediatricians is to advocate for our young patients, since children do not have a voice or a vote in decisions that impact their daily lives," Dr. Kraft said. "You will now represent children at the highest levels of government, in a position to make a profound difference in their health, safety and well-being."