



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

AAP News

AAP is marking and making history in 2020

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Editor's note: For the latest news on COVID-19, visit <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/01/28/coronavirus>.



Dr. Goza

The pandemic has hit pediatrics hard. No region of the U.S. has been spared. A new study from The Commonwealth Fund performed by researchers at Harvard University and health care technology company Phreesia showed that in April, outpatient visits were down 62% from baseline. We think this figure is conservative, as some members report their April volume was down 90% or more, despite accelerated use of telehealth among many practices.

We worry, too, for our nation's children as efforts to contain the novel coronavirus have interrupted basic care and left some without proper nutrition, education or protection.

The Academy and its members are working tirelessly to not only address the pandemic but avoid a backlog of deferred immunizations and medical care that threatens the health of our patients and communities and the viability of many pediatric providers.

We're in continuous communication with Congress, the administration and the Department of Health and Human Services, relentlessly advocating for pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists to be included in provider relief. If you have a moment, please go to <https://federaladvocacy.aap.org> (login required) and click on "Provide Needed Financial Support for Pediatricians Impacted by COVID-19 Crisis" to bolster the message that pediatric practices provide a crucial release valve for the health care system, and if pediatric practices go under, our nation's children will lose their frontline care.

New data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirm many children have missed important immunizations (see article at <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/05/08/covid19vaccinations050820>). As social distancing restrictions lift and people begin to circulate, children and teens who are not vaccinated will be at higher risk for contracting a disease that could cause more harm than COVID-19 - and could easily have been prevented.

Missing out on early milestone screenings means missing out on opportunities for early intervention that can prevent more serious problems down the road. In my own practice, a child recently was diagnosed with leukemia. Another child had a broken arm, but the parents were afraid to go to the emergency room.

I've spoken to nearly 100 reporters at major national and local media outlets, urging parents to reach out to their child's pediatrician and continue their care. And we've launched a digital marketing campaign, #CallYourPediatrician, to let parents know that going to the pediatrician is not only safe, but important during the



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pandemic.

At the same time we're meeting the urgency of the moment, we have our eye on the long-lasting changes this pandemic will create for U.S. children. While the direct health impact of the disease on children may be minimal, children in households of color and other marginalized groups will be disproportionately hurt by factors like housing instability, food insecurity and educational disparities.

We are confronting medical, social and economic inequities, lifting up the needs of communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 through our advocacy and education. We have joined the American Medical Association and other health organizations in urging the CDC to collect and publish data on COVID-19 testing, hospitalization and mortality by race and ethnicity. And we're revising guidelines, policy and educational programming in ways the pandemic demands.

Many questions about the pandemic and its aftermath remain, and the best way to manage that uncertainty is to stay connected and let science and evidence lead the way. To that end, the AAP Board of Directors has unanimously approved development of a child health clinical data registry, which will allow us to use data and metrics to prioritize areas of need. It also will help us develop policies, evidence-based guidelines and benchmarks that will allow us to improve child health and the care we provide all children (see article at <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/05/19/board051920>).

Since our founding 90 years ago, the Academy has led the way through the Great Depression, a world war and debilitating epidemics. What we're doing in our 90th year is just as extraordinary. Thank you for all you do. I know your faith will win the day.

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