



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

# AAP News

## AAP efforts to reach children globally in pandemic bolstered through collaboration

by AAP Global Child Health

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

COVID-19 has demonstrated that diseases do not respect borders and a coordinated national and global response to pandemics is crucial. The AAP has been working to mitigate the pandemic's global impact on children's health through partnerships, advocacy and support.

The disease has particularly affected health systems, vaccination campaigns, child protection systems and social services, and inequalities in low- and middle-income countries. The prevalence of underlying health conditions, poor nutrition, weak health systems, inadequate access to hygiene practices and clean water, and school closures all contribute to this crisis.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the only international organization with the technical capacity and global mandate to support the public health response of all countries during the pandemic. The AAP has a long history of working with the WHO to ensure child health issues are prioritized within the global health agenda.

When the Trump administration announced in April it would halt funding for the WHO, the AAP responded with press statements and joined a [letter](#) signed by 1,000 organizations urging the administration to reconsider. U.S. funding to the WHO has been vital to the health of children and families around the world, the AAP statements said.

On May 29, however, President Donald J. Trump announced that the U.S. was "terminating" its relationship with the WHO and would redirect funds to "other worldwide and deserving, urgent, global public health needs." At press time, no details or explanation of the administration's next steps were available.

"Withdrawing support from the WHO not only harms the global response against COVID-19 and prevents the United States from engaging the agency to enact meaningful reforms, but undermines the response to other major health threats impacting children," AAP CEO/Executive Vice President Mark Del Monte, J.D., said in a [statement](#).

During the pandemic, early childhood development programs require improved government support and protection. The Thrive Coalition, a Washington, D.C.-based coalition co-chaired by the AAP, shared [policy recommendations](#) and [programmatic guidance](#) with U.S. leaders. This includes requests for additional funding for foreign assistance accounts at the front lines, continuity of existing child-focused programming, flexibility of programming and passage of the Global Child Thrive Act.

The AAP also issued a [policy brief](#) on increasing child protection risks during COVID-19 with six other child health organizations as part of the Ending Violence Against Children Task Force.

Current, evidence-based AAP information is being shared with pediatric and nurse midwifery societies for use at facility and national levels. This includes resources to develop protocols for pregnant women and care at birth and to identify COVID-19 knowledge gaps as well as webinars to promote cross-country knowledge exchange.

To prevent future pandemics, the AAP endorsed the Global Health Security and Diplomacy Act of 2020. This comprehensive global health legislation would establish a coordinator for global health security and diplomacy at the Department of State and support coordinated interagency preparedness and response.



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The bill also authorizes U.S. participation in and funding for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (commonly known as CEPI). The international partnership organization is dedicated to developing vaccines for dangerous pathogens, including SARS-CoV-2. By bolstering preparedness, the U.S. can detect, deter and contain future infectious disease outbreaks overseas before they reach pandemic status.

## Section on Global Health

The Section on International Child Health has become the Section on Global Health. Nearly 1,000 members strong, the section works toward enhancing the health and well-being of children in low-resource settings globally through education, advocacy and service delivery.

The new section is led by an elected executive committee, including the chair, immediate-past chair and five members, each with a specific area of oversight. For more information on the section, visit <https://bit.ly/AAPglobalhealthsection>.

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