Peds 21 program to shine spotlight on why racial, health equity are vital
by Carla Kemp, Senior Editor


These are among the concepts taking center stage in the medical community as it focuses on fighting racism and improving health equity. But what do they mean for pediatricians in their practices, institutions and communities in urban, rural and suburban settings?

Research shows only 10%-20% of health outcomes are attributable to health care, said AAP President Sara "Sally" H. Goza, M.D., FAAP.

"If we are to address health disparities and help the next generation reach its full potential, we must actively advocate for health equity," she said. "This work must take place in our clinics, hospitals and communities as well as in our states and our nation's capital."

To that end, this year's Pediatrics for the 21st Century (Peds 21) program at the AAP National Conference will focus on equipping pediatricians to advance child health equity by applying an anti-racist lens to the systems shaping health and medicine. Titled "Fighting Racism to Advance Child Health Equity: A Call to Action," the program will take place from noon to 3 p.m. CDT on Saturday, Oct. 3.

"We need to rise up as a community coming around our diverse children to help make sure that they have equitable chances for a healthy future," said Joan Jeung, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, chair of the Peds 21 planning group and member of the AAP Section on Minority Health, Equity and Inclusion Executive Committee. "This is a chance for us to come together, get educated and hear that call to be advocates for our children."

The program will address the following topics:

- "The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health," by Maria E. Trent, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP (12:05-12:35 p.m. CDT);
- "A Is for Anti-Racist: How Pediatricians Can Promote Racial Justice Through Clinical Practice," by Tiffani J. Johnson, M.D., FAAP (12:35-1:05 p.m. CDT);
- "Building Diversity and Inclusion in Pediatric Medicine: A Journey of Personal and Institutional Transformation," by Jyothi Marbin, M.D., FAAP (1:05-1:35 p.m. CDT);
- "What Should I Do Next? Closing Thoughts and Call to Action," by Rhea W. Boyd, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP (2-2:30 p.m. CDT); and
- Q&A panel discussion (2:30-3 p.m. CDT).

"This year's Peds 21 program will prepare pediatricians to use the power of our platform to address health disparities and help create the conditions that we know support healthier children and families," Dr. Goza said.

Dr. Jeung added: "Our session addresses how both interpersonal and structural racism affect child health. That's why we need both individual/practice-level action (to improve communication and inclusivity) and advocacy/policy change to ensure better health for our increasingly diverse communities of children."