



The Alabama Pediatrician

Issue #3 2020

From the President

New year offers fresh opportunities



Katrina Skinner, MD, FAAP
Chapter President

Our Chapter moves into a new year of growth and opportunities for pediatrics in Alabama. While 2020 has posed many challenges for pediatric practices, I am excited about the many opportunities available to our members in the

coming year. As your advocates, we at the Alabama Chapter-AAP will continue to involve ourselves in every change that happens in our great state.

First, we have several board members who started a new term on October 1. Nola Jean Ernest, MD, FAAP, Vice President/President-Elect; Dr. Elizabeth Dawson, Secretary/Treasurer; Dr. Melissa McNally, Area 5 representative; and Leslie Sawyer, MD, FAAP, Area 4 representative.

Secondly, through the advocacy of your Chapter, Alabama Medicaid began covering additional services during the emergency period. Pediatric offices can now bill and be paid for virtual EPSDT and sick and well visits on the same day, as well as receive appropriate payment for COVID-19 testing. We are meeting regularly with the Medicaid Commissioner to ensure continued coverage of vital services during the pandemic and beyond.

The HPV QI project continues after a temporary delay and the Chapter is part of ADPH's stakeholder group for COVID vaccine distribution. We are also developing a school health project to improve communication between pediatricians and school nurses and outcomes for adolescents.

Finally, ACHIA is recruiting for its next QI project focusing on obesity prevention. The current early screening project has been a huge success!

We are making a difference in Alabama! Let the Board and Chapter office know how we can help you.

Virtual Annual Meeting attendees enjoy practice management pearls, mental health-focused sessions

Approximately 100 pediatricians and other healthcare providers from across the state gathered, virtually, for yet another successful Annual Meeting and Fall Pediatric Update on September 26 and 27, which featured a practice management session by our own now-president Katrina Skinner, MD, FAAP, a "panel discussion" on use of infant & early childhood mental health consultants in the pediatric medical home, behavioral health issues and child abuse during the pandemic, oral health and nutrition, two fantastic talks on early prevention of childhood obesity, and a COVID update from State Health Officer Scott Harris, MD. The meeting also worked in a Chapter business meeting and the usual door prize drawing on Sunday, along with annual awards presented intermittently throughout the conference.

"The AL-AAP meetings are always a great use of my time. I really like how professional the virtual experience was managed," wrote one respondent on the evaluation. "Great information, thanks," wrote another.

Four members were presented with awards for their work in pediatrics, including: Michael J. Ramsey, MD, FAAP, Carden Johnston Leadership Award; Stephanie A. Denton, MD, FAAP, Marsha Raulerson Advocacy Award; Lamenda Blakeney, MD, FAAP, Children's of Alabama Master Pediatrician Award; and Karen Landers, MD, FAAP, UAB Wallace Alexander Clyde Distinguished Service in Pediatrics Award.

AWARD WINNERS

Stephanie A. Denton, MD, FAAP, 2020 recipient of the Marsha Raulerson Advocacy Award:

Stephanie Denton, MD, FAAP, of Children's Medical Group in Birmingham, is this year's recipient of the Marsha Raulerson Advocacy Award, presented to a pediatrician member of the AL-AAP in recognition of steadfast service to children beyond the usual scope of practice through strong and faithful dedication to better policies for improved child health at the local, state and national levels.

Created in 2011, the award is named in honor of Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, of Brewton, who has worked tirelessly for children in Alabama during her more than 40 years of practicing community pediatrics through consistent and effective advocacy for children's programs and policies at the local, state and national levels.

Dr. Denton was recognized for her advocacy for children struggling with learning disabilities and dyslexia.

In 2014, she co-founded Alabama Game Changers, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit devoted to children with specific learning disorders. She has helped successfully lobby for



Stephanie Denton, MD, FAAP

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Alabama Chapter – AAP

Mission:

The mission of the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is to obtain optimal health and well-being for all children in Alabama, and to provide educational and practice support for its membership so the highest quality of medical care can be achieved.

Values:

Children must be highly valued by society.

Each child must develop to his/her highest potential.

Children must have strong advocates for they have no voice of their own.

Pediatricians are essential to achieving optimal child health. The work of pediatricians, and the profession of pediatrics, must endure and grow even stronger.

Vision:

Children in Alabama are happy and healthy; Alabama pediatricians are professionally fulfilled and financially secure.

Award Winners **continued from page 1**

legislation to have struggling readers screened for learning disorders such as dyslexia and for schools to make available necessary interventions and accommodations needed for these children. She received an AAP Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) implementation grant to help carry out this work, and has since been appointed as the Alabama Chapter-AAP's CATCH co-facilitator. Congratulations, Dr. Denton!

Michael J. Ramsey, MD, FAAP, 2020 recipient of the Carden Johnston Leadership Award:

Michael Ramsey, MD, FAAP, of Dothan Pediatric Healthcare Network, is this year's recipient of the Carden Johnson Advocacy Award, presented to a member of the ALAAP in recognition of a career in pediatrics that encompasses not only high ethical and professional standards in patient care, but includes extraordinary stewardship and service to the organized profession of pediatrics as a whole in Alabama and at the District and national levels of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Created in 2011, the award is named in honor of Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP, of Birmingham, who served the Alabama Chapter-AAP well for more than 30 years, holding numerous offices including Chapter Chairman from 1980 to 1983, and has represented Alabama and children on a multitude of national committees of the AAP and became the first Alabama Chapter member to become a national advocate for children as AAP President in 2003.

Dr. Ramsey was recognized for his long history of leadership in the Chapter and at the District level of the AAP, including service as a Chapter board member from 2008 to 2017, Chapter president from 2013-2015, and Pediatric Council Chair from 2015 to present, advocating for pediatricians and the children they serve to our state's payors.

In addition, he has demonstrated his ability to lead by serving as an advisor to the governor on Medicaid issues, and eagerly assisted in outreach to residents through the Chapter's career days over the years.

He has been recognized for his outstanding clinical practice and advocacy with such honors as the Children's of Alabama Master Pediatrician Award and the AAP Council on Community Pediatrics Local Hero Award. In 2017, he was presented with the Marsha Raulerson Advocacy Award for his tireless efforts in advocating for adequate Medicaid funding.

At the AAP District level, he has served as a member of the Chapter Forum Management Committee for District X, and is soon to assume the role of District Vice Chair.

Congratulations, Dr. Ramsey, on this well-deserved honor!



Dr. Ramsey accepts the Carden Johnston Leadership Award during the Virtual Annual Meeting.

Blakeney named Master Pediatrician, Landers honored with Wallace Clyde award

Recognizing outstanding accomplishments and dedication to the practice of general pediatrics, the Children's of Alabama Master Pediatrician has been awarded since 1991. Many long-time Chapter members have earned this distinction, and this year, Chapter member Lamenda (Mendy) Blakeney, MD, FAAP, a primary care pediatrician at Partners in Pediatrics in Montgomery, has

Award Winners **continued from page 2**

joined her colleagues on the list.

A native of New Orleans, La., Dr. Blakeney attained her undergraduate degree from Louisiana College and attended Louisiana State University Medical School. She completed a family medicine internship at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and her pediatric internship and residency at UAB and Children's of Alabama, where she received the Michele St. Romain Housestaff Award for compassion and dedication to her patients. Dr. Blakeney joined Partners in Pediatrics in Montgomery in 2001 and feels blessed to work with wonderful partners and an amazing staff. She loves working with the patients and families and believes that she is constantly learning on this journey.

The Wallace Alexander Clyde, M.D. Distinguished Service Award was established in 1984 by the UAB Department of Pediatrics and Children's as a means of recognizing outstanding physicians who have devoted a lifetime of service to children and their families. This year, Karen Landers, MD, FAAP, Health Officer with the Alabama Department of Public Health, was honored with the award.

Dr. Landers practiced primary care pediatrics in Florence, Ala. for two years prior to being recruited to ADPH in 1982. She continued to practice pediatrics within ADPH outpatient clinics while serving in numerous roles as health officer and continuing her career-long interest in communicable diseases. She has had a variety of special interests throughout her career, including pediatric tuberculosis and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, childhood immunization advocacy and combatting vaccine-preventable diseases, and emergency preparedness. Currently, as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response, Dr. Landers is one of two public health physician advisors to the ADPH Scientific Response Section and is the medical advisor to the ADPH Media Team. Congratulations, Drs. Blakeney and Landers!



Mendy Blakeney, MD, FAAP



Karen Landers, MD, FAAP

“Back to Vaccines, Back to the Doctor” campaign creates millions of impressions, rates showing slight improvement

Alabama Chapter-AAP and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)'s “Back to Vaccines, Back to the Doctor” media campaign, launched in mid-July, came to a close in mid-October, after millions of broadcast and digital impressions across the state. Also encompassing a postcard mailing that went to parents of all children in the ADPH database who were behind on their vaccines, the campaign encouraged parents/guardians to get to the doctor and keep their children's vaccinations up to date.

Reports from the Alabama Broadcasters Association, through which the advertisements were purchased by ADPH, showed that 4,219 ads ran on radio and television during the months of July and August and 11,200,000 “impressions” were realized via digital media over the three months of the campaign.

The latest statewide reports from ImmPRINT show a leveling off and slight improvement of the plummeting rates of vaccinations in March and April 2020 (54 percent down from the same period in 2019). There is still room for much improvement, however.

How are your patient load and immunization rates in general right now? For tips on getting patients back in the office, check out our companion Back to the Doctor Tip Cheat on the Chapter website. Click the QR code to access it.



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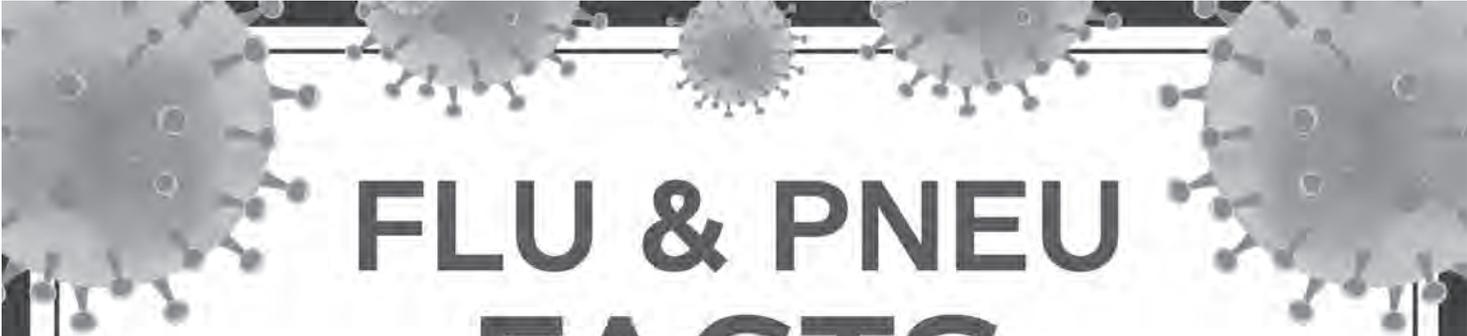
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FLU & PNEU FACTS

**Flu & Pneu Vaccines Reduce Illnesses, Doctor Visits,
Hospitalizations, Missed Work & School.**

MAKE A STRONG VACCINE RECOMMENDATION

As a health care professional, your strong recommendation is a critical factor that affects whether your patients get an influenza (flu) and pneumococcal (pneu) vaccine. Follow up with each patient during all appointments to ensure the patient received a flu and pneu vaccine.

CDC suggests using the **SHARE** method to make a strong vaccine recommendation and provide important information to help patients make informed decisions about vaccinations:

SHARE the reasons why flu and pneu vaccines are right for the patient given his or her age, health status, lifestyle, occupation, or other risk factors.

HIGHLIGHT positive experiences with flu and pneu vaccines (personal or in your practice), to reinforce the benefits and strengthen confidence in vaccines.

ADDRESS patient questions and any concerns about the flu and pneu vaccines, including side effects, safety, and vaccine effectiveness in plain and understandable language.

REMIND patients that flu and pneu vaccines protect them and their loved ones from serious illness and complications.

EXPLAIN the potential costs of getting flu and pneumococcal disease, including serious health effects, time lost (such as missing work or family obligations), and financial costs.

**USE THE S.H.A.R.E. APPROACH
TO FIGHTING FLU AND PNEUMONIA.**

Chapter works with state partners on school re-entry amid pandemic

August was a busy month for the Chapter leadership as we worked hand in hand with the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama State Department of Education on safe re-opening of schools amid the pandemic.

On August 4, the Chapter's ad hoc school re-entry committee conducted a Zoom call with the School Superintendent to ensure that the schools were working in tandem with the medical community before the school year began. From that point, the Chapter developed algorithms for both primary pediatric providers and school nurses to work hand-in-hand for the care and diagnosis of children who are dismissed from school due to COVID-like symptoms. The algorithms worked in conjunction with ADPH's toolkit for schools, and have been well-received by the school nurses.

Another outgrowth of the committee's work was a set of safety recommendations for high school football. The Chapter's next step includes a webinar to be held in conjunction with ADPH to promote the algorithms more pervasively and consistently to all providers, including nurse practitioners in urgent care facilities.

To access the algorithms, click the QR codes.



Scan code for healthcare provider algorithm



Scan code for school nurse algorithm

Chapter part of ADPH Stakeholder Group on COVID vaccine distribution plan

The Alabama Department of Public Health has convened a stakeholder group, which includes the Alabama Chapter-AAP, to serve in an advisory capacity in the plans for distribution of the COVID vaccine once the first one becomes available. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) requested plans from each state as it gets closer to a vaccine launch.

"ADPH submitted its COVID-19 Vaccination Plan to the CDC by the October 16 deadline. The plan is being reviewed by the CDC and comments will be provided back to the state," said Karen Landers, MD, FAAP, ADPH Health Officer. "We expect to release the plan once comments have been incorporated.

All indications are that the aged and immunocompromised adults will be prioritized first, with vaccines for children coming down the road.

According to the CDC website, at first, COVID-19 vaccines may not initially be recommended for children. In early clinical trials for various COVID-19 vaccines, only non-pregnant adults participated. However, clinical trials continue to expand those recruited to participate. The groups recommended to receive the vaccines could change in the future.

The CDC's stated goal is for everyone to be able to easily get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as large quantities are available. The plan is to have several thousand vaccination providers available so no one will have to travel far to be vaccinated.

HPV Peer-to-Peer project shows improvements thus far as results roll in

By Barbara Schuler

The Chapter's HPV Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Project, called Increasing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine Coverage by Strengthening Adolescent Immunization Quality Improvement Program (IQIP) Activities, is winding down. Supported by the Alabama Department of Public Health through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the project provided QI guidance and MOC Part 4 credit to 50 pediatric practices across the state in an effort to raise rates of HPV vaccination.

The first 13 practices have reached the end of the project and have received their six-month data. The goal of the project was to raise each practice's HPV vaccination initiation and completion rate by 10 percent. Twelve out of the 13 practices that have finished the project so far exceeded their goal of increasing their rate by 10 percent. All of the participating practices have been working hard on improving their processes for increasing rates among adolescents as well as "cleaning up" their ImmPRINT data.

Pippa Abston, MD, FAAP, and Bille Snell, MD, FAAP, have served as two of the 10 mentors for the project, and have summarized what some of their practices who have finished thought of the project:

Tender Care Pediatrics – "They were happy about their data and think the main change they made was to be more proactive about calling kids in for their second dose." -Dr. Abston

Purohit Pediatrics Anniston – "I asked what they thought was beneficial about the program and they replied that they thought what was most beneficial were the recommendations about the approach to announcing the vaccine, getting the whole staff involved, not just the providers, and standardizing the message among all the staff, so the parents would hear the same message over and over." - Dr. Snell

How can pediatricians prevent obesity? A look at ACHIA's 2021 obesity prevention collaborative

By Salina Sowell

Cason Benton, MD, FAAP, Medical Director of the Alabama Child Health Improvement Alliance (ACHIA), recently discussed obesity prevention with *The Alabama Pediatrician*.

The Alabama Pediatrician: Alabama pediatricians are acutely aware that nearly one in three children are overweight or obese by the time kindergarten begins. They well understand the challenges in helping children maintain a healthy weight. What is the focus of ACHIA's 2021 Healthy Beginnings collaborative and how will the collaborative help practices be more effective in obesity prevention in children?

Dr. Benton: The Healthy Beginnings collaborative will foster healthy behaviors and healthy weight for children under two years of age. Our curriculum uses the American Academy of Pediatrics' online self-paced modules that address evidence-based obesity prevention interventions in the first two years of life in the following ways:

- With sound nutrition;
- With responsive relationships, and
- With safe and healthy environments.

Key topics covered include breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, food

introduction, hunger and satiety, physical activity, parenting styles, and more.

Sandra Hassink, MD, FAAP, one of our country's leading experts on pediatric obesity, "kicked-off" the collaborative with two presentations at the Chapter's Virtual Annual Meeting, focusing on the "what" we should be doing, while equally important, on the "how" to be effective. How we approach discussions around healthy behaviors is as important as what we say.

The Alabama Pediatrician: The modules and Chapter meeting boost knowledge, but what are the collaborative measures to ensure that practice change ideas lead to improvement?

Dr. Benton: The collaborative measures look at what happens during well-child visits in the first 18 months of life. Naturally, we measure interventions around **optimal nutrition**, asking if our practices assess the current feeding state and address any concerns. We also measure how practices are doing with assessing and counseling about the **home environment**, which includes anything from media use to bottle-feeding. We measure reliability in obtaining and reviewing **weight**

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for length trends. Our last process measure looks at assessing and addressing **the social determinants of health**, such as food insecurity.

A family must be food-secure to put in place guidance around optimal nutrition and healthy environments.

Of course, to provide obesity prevention guidance, our patients must attend well-child visits. As always, the collaborative supports best reminder/recall approaches to effectively reach patients who are behind on these visits.

The Alabama Pediatrician: In what other ways will the collaborative support practices?

Dr. Benton: We have some great “SWAG” resources, such as magazines for families and teaching tools about healthy nutrition. Two things are special about ACHIA collaboratives. The first is working with community partners to bring synergy to practice improvements. For Healthy Beginnings, our partners include the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**) and Medicaid’s Alabama Coordinated Health Networks (**ACHNs**). The second is the opportunity for practices to learn from each other. Seeing how other practices approach barriers we have in common elevates our improvements in ways we could not reach in isolation. We

have a great lead physician in Dr. Norma Mobley.

The Alabama Pediatrician: Many practices around Alabama have participated in ACHIA’s collaboratives. What is going to be the same and what is going to be different about the collaborative this coming year?

Dr. Benton: Much of the collaborative is the same as in the past. Providers are eligible for Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Part 2 and 4 as well as CME at no charge. The work practices do in this collaborative aligns with Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) certification and re-certification. Focusing on well-visits in the first two years of life aligns with some payor incentives.

But, we do have some exciting changes! ACHIA is on a continuous improvement journey just like the practices. This collaborative has **fewer chart abstractions** and **fewer webinars**. The timeline to collect baseline and intervention data is longer. We are starting earlier this year with our kick-off in early December. **Enrollment is limited**, so I encourage interested practices to let us know as soon as possible if they would like to participate.

We are happy to answer any questions practices may have about participating. Email me at cbenton@peds.uab.edu or ACHIA’s Project Manager Linda Champion at lchampion@alaap.org.

HPV Peer-to-Peer project **continued from page 5**

Madison Children’s Clinic/Alabama Children’s Clinic – “Dr. Thotakura thinks the most useful part of the project was bringing the issue to his awareness, so that he remembered to address it specifically. He also found value in hearing perspectives/research about effective patient counseling strategies.” - Dr. Abston

Marshall County Pediatrics – “They were pleased with their data and Dr. Rhodes said she expects it will continue to improve because they are steadily bringing kids in for the shots!” - Dr. Abston

Kids Town Pediatrics – “They were thrilled with their data. They said

the most helpful change was putting HPV in the middle of the vaccines listed as due today. They feel very confident recommending the vaccine to boys now. They learned from us how to talk about cancer prevention for men, not just women. The main obstacle has been getting teens to come for appointments. I reminded them that starting the series at age 9 should be helpful, since I agree that visits fall off after 11-12.” - Dr. Abston

The remaining 37 practices will be finishing the project soon and we look forward to their results, which will hopefully be just as good,” said Barbara Schuler, the Chapter’s contracted HPV QI Project Manager.

Practice Management Association update

By Carol Aiken, PMA Chair

Due to COVID-19, many things are different in 2020, and your Practice Management Association has felt the effects in terms of not being able to hold our annual practice management workshop this year! But, we will hold our annual meeting in early December and move this year forward with plenty of educational sessions (albeit virtual, for now) to keep abreast of the latest in pediatric practice management.

That first opportunity is actually around the corner: join us for our 2021 coding webinar, “Getting Ready for 2021: Coding Changes,

Including New Office Visit Rules,” presented by Kim Huey of KGG Coding and Reimbursement Consulting, LLC. Register now here: <https://bit.ly/3dKmiRZ>.

The PMA membership is growing because of meetings like this and knowing others share your concerns in operating a successful pediatric practice. We hope your practice manager already belongs or will join soon! If you want to know more about the PMA follow this link: <https://www.alaap.org/practice-management-association-who-we-are>.



Amy Crosby

Reach Out and Read-Alabama welcomes Amy Crosby

The Alabama Chapter-AAP is happy to welcome and introduce our new Reach Out and Read-Alabama Statewide Coordinator, Amy Crosby, who joined the team in mid-August!

A cum laude graduate of the University of Alabama with a bachelor's degree in human development and family studies and an additional concentration in social welfare, Amy also completed post graduate work in the same areas. She has worked with children and families in a variety of settings, including prisons, schools, child care, and non-profits for more than 13 years. Amy coordinated the Alabama Project LAUNCH grant's local implementation site as well as the Networks of Opportunity for Child Well Being grant. Her most recent position was Agency Coordinator for the West Alabama Food Bank. Amy recently moved to Montgomery from Tuscaloosa.

Over the years, she has planned large events, conferences, and professional development opportunities, and has spoken at state and national conferences on family engagement, brain architecture and program development. She is a Leadership Tuscaloosa graduate.

Amy has two children, Hastin, age 20, and Max, age 17, and three dogs and one cat.

She enjoys reading (current favorite: *All The Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr), listening to podcasts (favorite: Hidden Brain), being outside as much as possible, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.

"I am very excited to be a part of Reach Out and Read-Alabama and the Alabama Chapter of the AAP! I look forward to advancing and expanding the work to reach more children across our state," Amy said.

Amy's focus over the next few months is to secure grants for the program, expand its visibility and establish its Advisory Council. She can be reached at acrosby@roralabama.org.

Practices use technology to host summer reading events

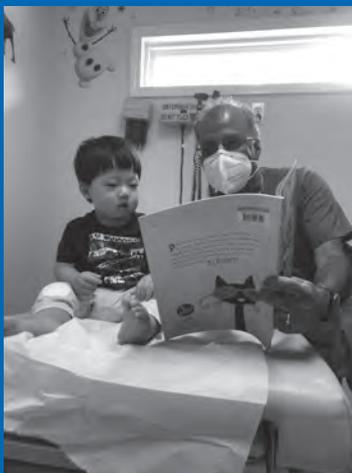
While this year's Rx for Summer Reading campaign looked a little different, the purpose remained the same — prescribing books to children and sharing the love of reading with Alabama's children and their families!

Teaming with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the lead agency for Alabama's Early Intervention System, the 2020 Rx for Summer Reading campaign featured *Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses*. Using the book as a basis to explore new feelings and emotions as well as the world in which we live, each event provided one simple reminder to families that spending time together with books can offer a safe harbor, even if only for a few moments each day.

From Dothan to Florence and from Bayou La Batre to Opelika, 24 program sites throughout the state turned to technology, hosting virtual events online to reach their patients and families. Many sites gave copies of the book to children during well visits on a particular day, week, or even throughout the month before hosting a storytime on their social media pages. At Pediatric Clinic, LLC in Opelika, David Smalley, MD, FAAP, created a video of his reading the book to his grandchildren that was shared on the practice's Facebook page at a specified time for their patients to read along with their own copy. "Our event this year, although different than last years' because of COVID-19, was so much fun!! It reached many of our families and children and also was neat since Dr. Smalley had just retired. In the past, we've had our city mayors from Auburn and Opelika read, and Dr. Smalley was honored this year as our 'celebrity reader!'" said Sara Smith T, MD, FAAP Reach Out and Read-Alabama medical consultant at Pediatric Clinic, LLC.

Gadsden Pediatric Clinic created a video of each of their providers reading parts of the book. "Pete the Cat is a well-loved character for kids and this book was perfect for teaching them to find the good in every day, even during these uncertain times," said Claire Yother, MD, FAAP, Reach Out and Read-Alabama medical consultant.

Mostellar Medical Center featured local celebrities reading the book, including Senator Doug Jones and his wife. Children's of Alabama practices, Pediatrics West McAdory and Bessemer, as well as Midtown Pediatrics and Pell City Pediatrics, provided bookmarks to their patients that included a QR code linking them to the video of their pediatrician reading the book.



“This year’s campaign emphasized how important the program is in reaching families during a time of uncertainty while providing a sense of normalcy,” said Salina Sowell, program and communications coordinator. “The most vital need of any child’s development is the need for attachment and connection, and our program provides that connection between parents and their children.”

Visit roralabama.org/rx-for-summer-reading for more information on each event.

“Making Connections and Building Brains” is what it is all about!

Big or small, everyday connections have the potential to positively impact the development of a child’s brain and as a result, impact his or her health, happiness and ability to learn.

These early connections of a child’s life matter – and their impact can last a lifetime.

By interacting with and responding to a child, parents and caregivers are stimulating the neural connections that build the foundation of brain development – and a child’s future. In addition, these connections build family strengths and resilience, and support the healthy relationships families need. By changing

the way families interact daily, we help build powerful, lasting connections.

“Reach Out and Read-Alabama is

focused on #MakingConnections that begin in our offices as we prescribe books to support families in understanding their children’s developmental milestones,” said Katrina Skinner, MD, FAAP, Chapter president. “The connection then continues in the home as parents read books with their young children, fostering healthy brain development and creating strong parent-child bonds that last a lifetime.”

“By changing the way families interact together daily, Reach Out and Read-Alabama helps build powerful, lasting connections. And, we, as pediatricians, know these connections matter!”

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Enfamil A.R.™

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Reduces frequent spit-up.



Enfamil® Reguline®

Prebiotic blend works in 1 week†

Designed to promote soft, comfortable stools.



Enfamil® ProSobee®

A dairy-free, soy-based alternative for sensitive tummies. Clinically proven to reduce fussiness and gas in 24 hours†.



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PurAmino™

Manages severe cow's milk protein and multiple food allergies. Has DHA to support brain development.

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Designed for toddlers who are transitioning to solid foods. Has 30 total nutrients and brain-nourishing DHA.



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* In amounts supplied by clinical research.
† As measured by Bayley-III cognitive score at 12 months in a different formula with MFGM added as an ingredient compared to a standard formula in the study without MFGM.
‡ vs. the same infants at the beginning of the study.
§ vs. the same infants at the beginning of the study. In infants who regurgitate frequently (5 or more spit-ups per day).

|| Infants fed a formula with the prebiotic blend had softer stools compared to a routine formula without prebiotics at 1 week.

§ LGG® is a registered trademark of Chr. Hansen A/S.

Studied before the addition of DHA, ARA and LGG.

Reference: 1. Timby N et al. Am J Clin Nutr. 2014;99:860-868.



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LET'S HEAR IT FROM OUR DEPARTMENTS OF PEDIATRICS!

Alabama Child Abuse Medical System (ALCAMS) to launch

By Michael Taylor, MD, FAAP, Professor and Director, Child Abuse Pediatrics, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine



Michael Taylor, MD, FAAP

On July 10, 2020, Governor Ivey announced a \$375,000 grant to Children's of Alabama and the UAB Department of Pediatrics to establish a statewide medical network to ensure that victims of child abuse receive immediate and professional care. The network, or the Alabama Child Abuse Medical System (ALCAMS), is a joint effort between UAB and the Alabama Network of Child Advocacy Centers (ANCAC).



Child maltreatment is a serious public health problem in Alabama. In 2018, reports were made to the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) involving 42,379

children¹. After investigation, 12,506 children were determined to be victims. This amounted to 4 percent of Alabama's children involved in investigations and 1 percent determined to be victims that year. The health consequences for abused children are substantial, with short-term consequences including physical injuries, STIs, pregnancy, mental health problems, and death (43 in 2018). The financial cost to society is staggering, estimated at \$2.3 billion annually in Alabama alone². The primary roles for the medical profession in the investigation are: determining the overall health of the child; identifying medical problems, including injuries, illnesses, or mental health problems; initiating treatment; and preventing any additional harm. The latter is accomplished through communication with the investigative agencies with a goal of protecting the child.

The ability of a medical provider (MP) to assist in the investigation of child maltreatment is dependent on the training and experience of the examiner. The MP needs specific training in child abuse pediatrics. There is considerable variability in residency training in child abuse pediatrics and even if the MP has been adequately trained, maintaining those skills through experience and ongoing education is difficult in the typical healthcare setting.

In recognition of this need, some states have developed medical networks in order to increase the quality and quantity of resources available to perform evaluations of abused children. Other states in the southeast with child abuse networks include Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Thanks to the generous grant from the Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs, Alabama will establish the ALCAMS network by early 2021. The immediate goals of the system will be to:

1. Recruit & train an adequate number of MPs across the state who are proficient in the recognition & management of child maltreatment;
2. Increase the quality of the medical evaluations by standardizing the approach to the assessment based on current recommendations;
3. Maintain a central database of the assessment results for ongoing reporting and quality improvement;
4. Provide support to the MPs by providing training in child abuse and ongoing peer review for cases seen;
5. Provide ongoing communication with the members of the investigative team (DHR, law enforcement) regarding indications for when to obtain a medical assessment; and
6. Collaborate with involved agencies to remove barriers and improve delivery of medical services to child maltreatment victims.

References:

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. Child Maltreatment 2018. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; 2020. (available at <https://bit.ly/3e1O78s>)
2. Boschung M, Kendrick A, Addy S, Bell G, Ijaz A, Riiman V. The cost of child maltreatment to the Alabama economy in 2013. From the Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, The Children's Trust Fund. Available at <https://bit.ly/3mvug4n>

USA Pediatrics announces dedication of small baby unit for specialized care of premature infants

By David Gremse, MD, FAAP, Chair, Department of Pediatrics, University of South Alabama



David Gremse, MD, FAAP

USA Children's and Women's Hospital recognized Fabien Eyal, MD, FAAP, Medical Director of the Hollis J. Wiseman Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, by dedicating the Small Baby Unit in his honor. Dr. Eyal has a passion for caring for extremely low birth weight infants that has led to national recognition of the NICU he leads for its success in caring for this premature patient population. Neonatologists have come a long way in pushing the envelope of survival for extremely low birth weight infants. I recall in the 1980's the advice given to parents about the survival rates of premature infants born between 22 to 29 weeks gestation was 10 times the last digit of the gestational age, 20% for 22-weekers, 30% for 23-weekers, etc. Today, the survival rate at USA Children's and Women's NICU for extremely low birth weight infants delivered at 22 weeks gestation is 66%, including a 67% survival rate for infants with a birth weight <300 grams. The lowest

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Coding

O Preparing for the upcoming 2021 Evaluation and Management (EM) documentation changes

by Lynn Abernathy Brown, CPC

R **QUESTION:** What can I do now to prepare for the upcoming 2021 Evaluation and Management (EM) documentation changes?

N **ANSWER:** The purpose of the upcoming change is to reduce the documentation burden on the provider. A few things that I think will help a pediatric provider prepare for the upcoming changes now are:

1. Determine if the level of care calculator in the EMR is used to determine the billed CPT code. If the provider has an EMR and uses this function, then contact your EMR vendor to ask when the company will be updating its system for this calculation. Since not everyone uses an EMR or uses it to calculate the level of care, this may not apply to you.
2. Review your documentation and if the provider includes “accompanied by ____,” then you may want to enhance this information to document who gave the history. For example, “history reported by Jane Doe, Mother” or “Mother, Jane Doe, reports that ____.”
3. One of the expected benefits for pediatrics will be to “count” Assessment requiring an independent historian as one of the components in Medical Decision-Making. Note that all the clarifications are not yet known and this is one that may be further clarified later.

There are many presentations about preparing for the change but essentially Medical Decision-Making or Time is going to determine the code level in the future.

The PMA (Alabama Chapter-AAP Practice Management Association) has scheduled a presentation by Kim Huey, coding expert, on November 30 and I look forward to hearing her speak on this topic. If you are a member of the Alabama Chapter-AAP, I am happy to add you to the PMA group email list. Email lynn.brown@childrensal.org if you would like to be added to this group.

DISCLAIMER: Children’s of Alabama does not accept responsibility or liability for any adverse outcome from the advice of Lynn A. Brown, CPC, for any reason, including inaccuracy, opinion and analysis that might prove erroneous, or the misunderstanding or misapplication of extremely complex topics. Any statement made by Lynn A. Brown, CPC, does not imply payment guarantee by any payor discussed.

Event Calendar

November 30, 2020
Chapter/PMA Webinar:
Getting Ready for 2021:
Coding Changes, Including
New Office Visit Rules
12:15 p.m.

April 22 - 25, 2021
2021 Spring Meeting &
Pediatric Update
Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort
Destin, FL

September 24 - 26, 2021
2021 Annual Meeting &
Fall Pediatric Update
The Sheraton Birmingham

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NEWS FROM MEDICAID

Participating ACHN primary care provider groups: Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition attestation

Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) is a care delivery model in which patients receive the care they need in a manner they can understand (American College of Physicians, 2019). The goal of PCMH is to help build stronger relationships with patients and their physicians.

Participating Alabama Coordinated Health Network (ACHN) Primary Care Provider (PCP) groups that have obtained PCMH recognition or have documented progress toward PCMH recognition may qualify for a 5 percent PCMH bonus payment. The PCMH bonus is paid quarterly to ACHN participating providers who satisfy attestation and ACHN participation guidelines. Attestation for the PCMH bonus payment is due August 1 annually to the Alabama Medicaid Agency (Medicaid).

Please note that achieving PCMH recognition/working toward PCMH recognition and attesting to Medicaid are separate

processes. You must achieve PCMH recognition or work toward PCMH recognition before attesting to Medicaid. Obtaining PCMH recognition is optional and will not affect a PCP group’s quality or cost-effectiveness bonus payments.

PCP groups that are interested in obtaining PCMH recognition should contact one of the national certifying agencies (e.g. The Joint Commission, National Committee for Quality Assurance, The Compliance Team, etc.). Medicaid cannot assist with the PCMH recognition process. PCMH recognition may be a lengthy process, therefore, it is best to start as soon as possible to avoid the possibility of missing the August 1 attestation deadline.

If you have questions about PCMH attestation, you may email ACHN@medicaid.alabama.gov.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama teams with Chapter to promote healthy behaviors among its members

Since 2008, the Chapter's Pediatric Council has been an effective forum for your Chapter leaders to advocate for adequate child health coverage to our state's major payors, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama, ALL Kids and the Alabama Medicaid Agency. But did you know that the relationships we have built there have also resulted in other positive outcomes for children?

Through the Chapter's advocacy to payors about the importance of communicating healthy behaviors with parents and teens, Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) decided to "run with the idea" and embarked on a co-branded campaign with the Chapter entitled "Pediatric Partnership Wellness," an email campaign to BCBS members to promote healthy behaviors that, together, both the payor and pediatricians find important to child health.

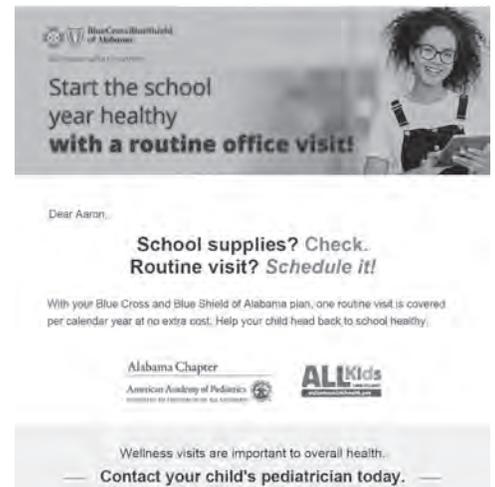
"Our goal is to assist in supporting members [patients] and pediatricians in joint educational campaigns designed to raise awareness and promote activities that improve health outcomes," said Daniel Jackson of BCBS's Healthcare Networks.

To kick off the partnership, BCBS leaders met with the Pediatric Council to brainstorm topic ideas, which prompted the first

promotion: the importance of well visits among adolescents. Blue Cross worked with the Chapter to finalize the language and came up with a targeted email (see image) to children (and their parents) ages 11-19 in the ALL Kids plan.

In September, BCBS reported to the Chapter that the email's deliverability rate was high--over 95 percent--translating to more than 3,000 emails being delivered. In addition, the open rate was double the benchmark, with indications that many people opened the email more than one.

Both the Chapter and BCBS are looking forward to additional joint educational efforts in the future.



Meningitis B Action Project

a joint initiative by The Kimberly Coffey Foundation and The Emily Stillman Foundation

Your Patients Can't Act on What They Don't Know

Make sure you talk to your adolescent patients about **BOTH the MenACWY and MenB vaccines** so they can make an informed decision about preventing meningococcal disease.

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"Like most parents, we thought our daughters were fully protected against meningococcal meningitis. They were not."

— PATTI WUKOVITS AND ALICIA STILLMAN, FOUNDERS OF THE MENINGITIS B ACTION PROJECT.

Patti and Alicia each lost their young daughters, Kimberly and Emily, to Meningitis B.

CHAPTER BRIEFS

Dr. Kimberlin to join WHO expert group



David Kimberlin, MD, FAAP

David Kimberlin, MD, FAAP, professor in the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, has been invited to join an expert group of the Departments of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (SHR) and Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing (MCA) at the World Health Organization (WHO) to review evidence on mother-to-child transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and to create

a consensus case definition. The group will also assist with identifying gaps and formulating recommendations for research and reporting of mother-to-child of SARS-CoV-2. Kudos, Dr. Kimberlin!

Dr. Raulerson receives AAP Clifford G. Grulee Award



Dr. Raulerson delivers her "Speak up for Children prescription" to Alabama Congresswoman Terri Sewe

The Chapter's own Marsha Raulerson, MD, MEd, FAAP, a community pediatrician in Brewton, past president of the AL-AAP (2003-2005), and a long-time active member and child advocate, was the recipient of the 2020 Clifford G. Grulee Award at the annual business meeting during the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) National Convention on Monday, Oct. 5. The Grulee Award, the most impor-

tant recognition the AAP renders, was established in 1951 in honor of

Clifford G. Grulee. Dr. Grulee served as secretary-treasurer and, later, executive secretary of the AAP from its founding in 1930 until his retirement in 1951. The award is given by the AAP Executive Committee/AAP Board of Directors to a Fellow who has demonstrated outstanding service to the AAP beyond that required of the elected leadership. Recipients are identified based on long-term accomplishments.

In addition to her many roles with the Chapter, Dr. Raulerson is the former chair of the AAP Committee on Federal Government Affairs and has founded or led numerous programs to improve child health locally, statewide and nationally. She is also a member of the Section on Senior Members and the Section on Tobacco Control. Congratulations, Dr. Raulerson, on receiving this well-deserved award!

Children's of Alabama develops COVID dashboard resource

Children's of Alabama has created a COVID Dashboard as a resource for pediatric healthcare providers and public health officials. Referring physicians receive a screen shot of the dashboard at least every two weeks via email. Hospital leaders are working to add more metrics and expect the dashboard to evolve, especially during flu season.

The metrics displayed in the Children's COVID Dashboard include:

1. The current number of COVID-19 positive patients currently hospitalized at Children's,
2. The current number of Persons Under Investigation (PUI) currently hospitalized at Children's,
3. The cumulative number of patients with COVID-19 admitted to Children's both with and without positive COA lab tests,
4. The number and percentage of hospitalized asymptomatic patients screened for COVID who were positive, and
5. The number and percentage of hospitalized PUI patients who were tested for COVID who were positive.

Let's Hear it for Our Department of Pediatrics **continued from page 11**

birth weight premature infant survivor to graduate to discharge from USA Children's and Women's NICU was 254 grams. The success of the NICU at USA is due in large part to Dr. Eyal's skill in discerning the most promising management strategies for the care of extremely low birth weight premature infants. His leadership, along with the dedicated efforts over the past decades of fellow neonatologists Drs. Keith Peevy, Michael Zayek, and Richard Whitehurst and a team of highly skilled neonatal nurse practitioners, NICU nurses, and therapists have contributed to the survival of these infants. As the survival rates of premature infants delivered at earlier gestational ages improve, many question the neurodevelopmental outcomes of these

infants. As a Children's and Women's Hospital, the advantage of being involved in the perinatal care of these neonates is demonstrated by a cerebral white matter injury rate of 12% for inborn infants at 22-26 weeks gestation compared to 20% for those infants delivered outside USA Children's and Women's Hospital.

I am excited for the infants who will benefit from the skilled compassionate and comprehensive care provided by the dedicated staff in the Small Baby Unit and for the hope it provides to families in need of this specialized care.

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For registration information, contact Tiffany.Kaczorowski@ChildrensAL.org or 205.638.6916