



The Alabama Pediatrician

Third Quarter 2023

From the President Celebrating our collective commitment: A recap of the 2023 Annual Meeting & upcoming initiatives



Nola Jean Ernest, MD, FAAP
Chapter President

I am thrilled to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who attended the recent 2023 Annual Meeting & Fall Pediatric Update at the beautiful Ross Bridge Resort. Our time together was nothing short of inspiring, as we celebrated the “million

dreams” of dedicated pediatricians working tirelessly, hand-in-hand, to care for the children of Alabama.

At this event, we had the honor of recognizing outstanding members of our community, whose contributions have truly made a lasting impact. Congratulations to those esteemed colleagues who were honored with awards during the weekend; your dedication and excellence serve as a beacon for us all.

For those who were unable to join us, I encourage you to mark your calendars for our upcoming Spring Meeting, scheduled for April 18-21, 2024, at The Lodge at Gulf State Park. It will be another exceptional opportunity to connect, learn, and grow together as we continue our mission to advance pediatric healthcare in Alabama.

Additionally, I am pleased to share that our Chapter is responding to the important advocacy needs identified by our members through the recent member survey. One significant focus area is firearm injury and death prevention. We commenced this vital work with a dedicated webinar aimed at training Alabama pediatricians in effective advocacy on this critical topic. For those

continued on page 2

Annual Meeting attendees celebrated one another, learned valuable pediatric pearls

In September, more than 100 pediatricians and other healthcare providers from across the state gathered for the Chapter’s Annual Meeting and Fall Pediatric Update at the Renaissance Ross Bridge Resort in Birmingham, as well as numerous pediatric practice managers. The conference featured a Friday practice management workshop, a Chapter business meeting on Sunday, and the annual awards dinner in association with Children’s of Alabama.

Attendees earned MOC Part 2 and CME for the conference’s fantastic talks, which included a panel presentation on the PATHS (Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services) program, pediatric gynecology, pediatric allergy, preventing and responding to toxic stress, dietary considerations for athletes, addressing the 21st Century Cures Act and information-sharing, and a special screening of the film, “Virulent: The Vaccine War,” which explored vaccine hesitancy.

This year, the conference’s theme, “The Greatest Showman,” celebrated the many successes and contributions that Alabama pediatricians make to child health in our state.

One of the most special ways we celebrated those efforts was at the Children’s of Alabama/UAB/ Chapter Awards Dinner, when Chapter President Nola Ernest, MD, PhD, FAAP, recognized several individuals for their outstanding work, including:

AL-AAP 2023 Legislative Hero, Alabama Representative Rolanda Hollis

- In recognition of her leadership and tireless efforts in support of the health and safety of Alabama’s children, specifically working to pass a bill that prohibits smoking in vehicles in which children under age 14 are present;

LaDonna Crews, MD, FAAP, AL-AAP general/ adolescent medicine pediatrics at USA Department of Pediatrics, as the 2023 recipient of the Marsha Raulerson Advocacy Award, in recognition of her:

- Lifelong devotion to dedicated advocacy for her patients that has enhanced the health and well-being of each of their lives
- Advocacy to resolve common problems that occur with particular medical devices, implementing unique medical documentation required by different insurance companies to obtain prior authorization for DME, diapers and specialized formulas



Katrina Skinner, MD, FAAP, President’s Awardee (left) and Kym Middleton, MD, FAAP, recipient of the Early Career Physician Award (right), with Chapter President Nola Ernest, MD, PhD, FAAP



LaDonna Crews, MD, FAAP, accepts the 2023 Marsha Raulerson Advocacy Award

continued on page 2

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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.

From the President continued from page 1

who didn't attend, please visit the Chapter website to view the recording.

Thank you all for your unwavering dedication and the compassion you show each day in the care of Alabama's children. Let us carry the spirit of unity and commitment forward as we embark on these important initiatives.

Annual Meeting continued from page 1

- Enhancement of bedside education of trainees in the care of children with medical complexity and emphasizing care coordination
- Mentorship of other pediatricians along their own advocacy journeys through encouraging active participation in the Chapter and in quality improvement initiatives that positive impact patients

Kym Middleton, MD, FAAP, hospitalist at Huntsville Hospital for Women and Children, as the 2023 recipient of the Early Career Pediatrician Award, in recognition of her:

- Demonstrating exceptional leadership skills within the Alabama Chapter-AAP leadership, proving herself to be a trailblazer and innovator
- Enthusiastic commitment to education of the Chapter membership at large by co-hosting the new *Alabama Pediatrician Podcast*
- Service on the Huntsville Library Foundation board, demonstrating her genuine desire to positively impact the lives of young minds outside of the medical setting.

Katrina Skinner, MD, PhD, FAAP, Fairhope Pediatrics

- In recognition of her above-and-beyond work in supporting the practice of pediatrics through payor advocacy and promotion of immunizations

In addition, District X special achievement awards were presented to:

Shawn Cecil, MD, FAAP, pediatrician at UA Medical Center, Tuscaloosa

- For his dedication and effort in organizing the Chapter's mental health committee as well as moving strategic priorities forward for child mental health in Alabama.



Drs. Nancy McCorkle, Shameza Boyd, Iris Fancher and Kym Middleton are all smiles as they are picked to be Chapter activity "reporters" at the Annual business meeting.



Members of the PATHS team provide examples of how the program helps pediatricians' patients.



Shawn Cecil, MD, FAAP, is honored with a District X award



Elizabeth Dawson, MD, FAAP, is honored with a District X award

Annual Meeting continued from page 2**Elizabeth Dawson, MD, FAAP, pediatrician at Enterprise Pediatric Clinic**

- For her determination in furthering the education and engagement of pediatricians in adverse childhood experiences by securing two back-to-back Chapter grants for projects that address domestic violence and child resilience.

David Lozano, MD, FAAP, pediatric pulmonologist at Dothan Pediatric Specialty Clinic

- For his doggedness in advocating for Medicaid patients with limited access to PAP, sounding the alarm during the supply shortage, and his presence in the discussions that ultimately resolved barriers.

The festivities concluded with Children's awarding of its Master Pediatrician and Wallace Clyde awards (see story below).



David Lozano, MD, FAAP, is honored with a District X award

Bashir named Master Pediatrician, Tofil 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 Lotfi Bashir, MD, FAAP, of Selma Pediatrics, has joined his colleagues on the list.

Dr. Bashir was born and raised in Aleppo, Siria and attended undergraduate and medical school at Aleppo University. He completed his residency at the Medical Center of Delaware, and was recruited by the Vaughan Regional Hospital in Selma, where he established his solo practice, Selma Pediatrics, where he has practiced ever since. He has served as the pediatric teaching director of the UAB Selma Family Medicine Program for more than 10 years, and is a strong advocate for the Reach Out and Read program. His passion for early literacy has prompted him to write 10 children's books that have become part of his practice's anticipatory guidance for families. He is also passionate about mental health and is heavily involved in the Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services program.

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, Nancy Tofil, MD, MEd, a professor of pediatrics and the division director of Pediatric Critical Care at UAB, was honored with the award for her many accomplishments, including helping to create and found the Pediatric Simulation Centers at Children's of Alabama/UAB in 2008. She also serves as the senior associate program director of the Pediatric Residency Training Program.

Congratulations, Drs. Bashir and Tofil!



The year's Master Pediatrician recipient, Lotfi Bashir, MD, FAAP, accepts the Master Pediatrician jacket of distinction from previous Master Pediatrician recipient Eric Tyler, MD, FAAP



Nancy Tofil, MD, MEd, accepts the Wallace Clyde Award from Mitch Cohen, Chair of the UAB Department of Pediatrics

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Nirsevimab approved, distribution begins

Updates RE: nirsevimab

As all pediatricians know, Nirsevimab, new RSV monoclonal antibody, was approved in August, and the Alabama Chapter-AAP immediately advocated to our Alabama payors regarding coverage. Nirsevimab is covered by VFC; Alabama Medicaid sent out an alert on September 1; and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama indicated that their system is now set up for coverage. Ordering has begun through VFC and you can refer to the AAP coding guidance (scan QR code).

Recent Updates

- On October 4, the American Academy of Pediatrics held a member-wide “town hall” with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and nirsevimab. Here is what we learned:
 - The AMA has approved two new CPT codes ((96380, 96381) related to the administration of nirsevimab, one of which values the work associated with providing counseling. (Refer to coding guidance).
 - The CDC will allow flexibilities in borrowing between private and VFC stock of nirsevimab this season (but encourages this only as an exception to the rule).
 - The CDC also is allowing hospitals and birthing centers participating in VFC to stock only nirsevimab and hepatitis B vaccine. CDC leaders are working to include nirsevimab as part of bundled hospital payments at birth, but that likely will not happen this season.
 - The AAP has called for continued access to palivizumab for high-risk children this season and has provided updated guidance. Palivizumab can be used for eligible children when nirsevimab is not available. Children who receive fewer than five doses of palivizumab in the 2023-24 season can receive one dose of nirsevimab but should not receive any additional doses of palivizumab. Children who receive nirsevimab should not receive palivizumab later that season.
- The Chapter staff has confirmed with Alabama’s VFC program that specialty providers can enroll in VFC in order to administer nirsevimab and birthing hospitals can enroll in VFC and only provide nirsevimab and the Hepatitis B vaccine. We are having conversations with the Hospital Association to make them aware of these flexibilities and to encourage participation in the VFC program.
- To provide an example of clinical practice: we have heard that at least one large practice in Alabama has made the decision to give nirsevimab at the two-week visit, so that hopefully by then, insurance coverage has been established.

Resources

1. AAP RSV resources, including information on ordering, dosing, coding and a visual guide for nirsevimab administration: Scan QR code
2. Alabama Medicaid alert, September 1, 2023: <https://tinyurl.com/33s378ej>
3. Town hall meeting recording: <https://tinyurl.com/3zcwrumn>
4. Town hall summary from AAP News: <https://tinyurl.com/5x3km2bj>
5. Information for clinicians from the CDC on nirsevimab: <https://tinyurl.com/mxpzmsu>



COVID-19 vaccine update from town hall meeting

Updated COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech are available for people ages 6 months and older and from Novavax for those 12 years and older to better match circulating strains. The updated vaccines are the first to be sold commercially instead of distributed via the government as they were during the height of the pandemic.

As with nirsevimab, the CDC will allow borrowing between private and VFC stock this season to ease the implementation.

The CDC also has decreased minimum VFC order quantities to help reduce waste, ease logistics and help with limited storage capacity.

In another move to improve logistics for pediatricians, Pfizer recently announced 100% returns for the three-dose COVID-19 vaccine vials authorized for children 6 months through 4 years.

Resources

1. Information from the AAP on COVID-19 vaccines, including a dosing guide and information on payment: <https://www.aap.org/covid>
Questions not answered on the site can be emailed to covid-19@aap.org.
2. CDC interim clinical guidance on COVID-19 vaccines: <https://tinyurl.com/bdn3yx8j>

Chapter begins engagement of members on firearm injury/death prevention advocacy

This past Spring, Chapter members identified “gun violence safety” as the most important advocacy issue that they wanted the Chapter to address.

On October 18, the Chapter held its first webinar on this issue, Firearms Injury/Death Prevention Advocacy, which is our first step in our work on this issue. The webinar featured emergency department and trauma specialists from both the University of Alabama at Birmingham/Children’s of Alabama and the USA Health Children’s & Women’s Hospital, who provided an overview on the burgeoning number of firearm injuries and deaths in Alabama among children and adolescents.

The session also explored what we as pediatricians can do to begin to advocate for children, both inside and outside of the clinic setting. Visit the Chapter website’s home page at www.alaap.org to access the recording.

Future sessions will cover how to begin to address this in the clinical setting; we will be partnering with Children’s of Alabama and other organizations who have started this work in their own institutions.

Down the road, the vision is for lawmakers to begin to understand that children must be protected through common sense laws.

We hope to hear from you! If you are interested in helping us shape the Chapter’s work in this area, please complete this short interest form--<https://www.alaap.org/chapter-involvement>—and note “firearms advocacy” under area of interest.

Many thanks to our advertisers

Alabama Public Health
Immunization Division

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Children’s of Alabama

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Medicine



Her cure happened here.

Kennedi is cured of sickle cell disease thanks to a life-changing bone marrow transplant she received from her sister here at Children’s of Alabama. The amazing treatments, discoveries and innovations for pediatric blood disorders and cancer happening here are helping change lives for the children of Alabama, across the country and around the world.

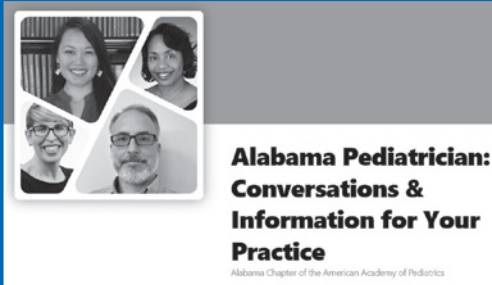


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The Alabama Pediatrician Podcast: Have you caught an episode yet?



The Alabama Pediatrician Podcast launched six months ago and has quickly become a smashing success as hosts John McLendon, MD, FAAP, and Kym Middleton, MD, FAAP, have shined light on amazing pediatric expertise and child health efforts, right here in Alabama!

Thus far, 16 episodes have aired, and you can find them on your favorite podcast directory, including Spotify, iTunes, Amazon and others.

Here is a list of episodes thus far, from most recent to the oldest (go here-- <https://www.buzzsprout.com/2176486/episodes>--and click the episode to read the synopsis for more details).

- AL Public Health Updates with Dr. Stubblefield
- AAP Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention with Dr. Blancher
- 2023 AL AAP Fall/Annual Meeting Recap!
- PATHS: Meet the Case Coordinator and the Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant!
- Disaster Preparedness with Dr. Wes Stubblefield
- All About the AAP Annual Leadership Conference!
- Updates in Neonatal HIV with Dr. Claudette Poole
- Partnership for Children with Tish MacInnis
- 2023 AL AAP Member Survey Results Review (with Chapter leadership)
- 2022 AAP Practice Guideline Revision for Management of Hyperbilirubinemia with Dr. John McLendon
- Reach Out and Read with Amy Crosby and Salina Sowell
- PATHS: Project ECHO with Dr. Connie Chang and Dr. Grant Allen
- Spring Meeting Recap with Dr. Norma Mobley and Dr. Meagan Carpenter
- The End of the Public Health Emergency with Dr. Michael Ramsey and Executive Director Linda Lee
- PATHS Introduction with Dr. Marsha Raulerson and Susan Griffin
- Meet Nola Ernest, MD, FAAP, your Chapter President!

Other topics in the works include practice management, obesity and orthopedics parts 1 & 2, autism resources and care, newborn hearing screening, lead poisoning, among many others!

In addition to online podcast directories, you can find the Alabama Pediatrician podcast on the Chapter's podcast hosting platform here: <https://alabamapediatrician.buzzsprout.com>.

Let the hosts know of ideas for future episodes, or if you would like to join as a guest, by completing this short form: <https://www.alaap.org/submit-your-podcast-topic-ideas>.



Event Calendar

October 20-24, 2023
2023 AAP National
Conference & Exhibition
Washington, DC

April 18-21, 2024
2024 Spring Meeting &
Pediatric Update
The Lodge at Gulf State Park
Gulf Shores, AL

September 13-15, 2024
2024 Annual Meeting &
Fall Pediatric Update
Ross Bridge Resort
Birmingham, AL

More than 100 pediatric practices across the state involved in PATHS

Now both urban and rural practices can become part of this successful program.

For the past five years, the PATHS (Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services) program at Children's of Alabama has been dedicated to improving access to behavioral health services for children by partnering with pediatricians and other primary care providers.

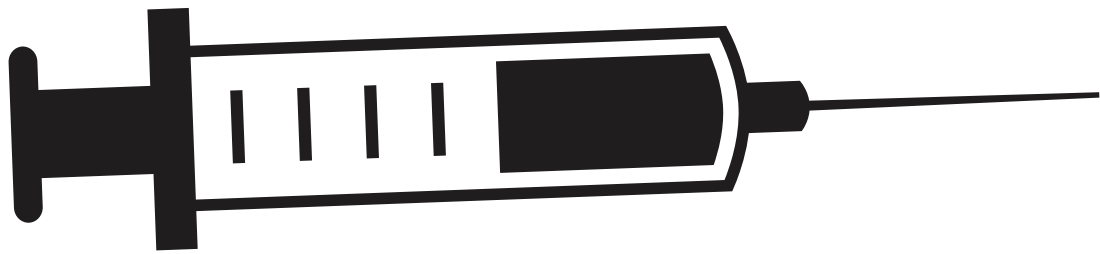
The program offers training through the ECHO model to assist primary care providers and their clinical staff in the diagnosis and management of behavioral health concerns. Providers enrolled in PATHS also have access to provider-to-provider consultation with a member of the PATHS mental health team to discuss specific concerns they have regarding patients in their care. Lastly, for patients with more complex behavioral health needs, PATHS offers direct services to enrolled pediatric practices via telemedicine visits provided by members of the PATHS mental health team.

PATHS currently has 101 practices engaged with the program and is looking to enroll additional providers, now even in urban areas.

If you didn't come to the Annual Meeting, the best way to hear about the value of the program is to listen to the Chapter's three podcasts on the topic, which can be found here: <https://alabamapediatrician.buzzsprout.com/>.

For more information or to enroll in PATHS, contact Susan Griffin, PATHS Director, at Susan.Griffin@childrensal.org or (205) 638-5673.

DON'T WAIT VACCINATE



Get Vaccinated • Protect Against Covid & Flu

The COVID-19 Vaccine is currently available to anyone 6 months of age and older.

The vaccine is safe and effective. Don't wait, get vaccinated today to help stop the spread and keep our community safe.



alabamapublichealth.gov/imm

What's in store for the 2024 Spring Meeting!

Save the dates for April 18-21 at The Lodge at Gulf State Park

The topics and speakers are already coming together and in fact, the list is almost completed for the Chapter's 2024 Spring Meeting & Pediatric Update, which will be held April 18-21, 2024 at The Lodge at Gulf State Park.

We are excited to announce two very interactive presentations:

- The Frameworks Institute will provide a 1.5- to two-hour session on how to advocate and message the importance of vaccinations. The American Academy of Pediatrics is providing funding for the experts at Frameworks to address this issue at the Chapter/state level. We are delighted to host them.
- Another exciting session will be a disaster preparation deep-dive! A team from UAB Department of Pediatrics, Division of Emergency Medicine, will facilitate a tabletop exercise, in which participants will go through a weather disaster scenario in an Alabama community that has resulted in pediatric injuries. This will be followed by a pediatric emergency readiness talk for community pediatricians.

Other topics already confirmed include:

- A Teen Mental Health Workshop: Applying ACHIA Teen Mental Wellness Collaborative Lessons Learned to Your Practice
- Maternal Substance Use (specific topic titles coming)
- Co-Managing Inflammatory Bowel Disease

More information coming soon, but for now, mark your calendars!

Fall update from the Chapter Mental Health Committee

By Shawn Cecil, MD, FAAP, Chair

The Chapter Mental Health Committee remains at hard work. We continue having quarterly meetings with Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner Kim Boswell to discuss pressing mental health needs of children in Alabama. As a result, this has stimulated much conversation and led to new ideas. Discussions have been held regarding crisis centers across the state, education and assistance being provided in the school setting, and Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC). Throughout these talks, it is very encouraging to hear the level of commitment that Commissioner Boswell has for our children.

Behind the scenes, the members of the committee have been very busy. Committee member Elizabeth Dawson, MD, FAAP is the lead content physician for the 2024 ACHIA quality improvement collaborative focusing on trauma-informed care and resiliency. We are working with Community Mental Health Centers regarding HIPAA and the sharing of patient information. There are ongoing talks about how we can embed Early Childhood Specialists in physician clinics to provide face-to-face education to families.

In addition, our Suicide Prevention Ambassador Madeleine Blancher, MD, FAAP, has done a great deal to get the word out about the all-important *AAP Blueprint on Youth Suicide Prevention*, which she highlighted in the last issue of *The Alabama Pediatrician*. Scan the QR code to access the Blueprint and other resources that she has compiled for you.

And finally, the Chapter office worked with pediatricians who take part in PATHS (the Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services) program to promote the value of this program, based at Children's (see article on page 6).

There is still much to be done, but I truly believe that we are making positive strides to help better the care for children in Alabama. If you have anything that you feel needs to be addressed, please feel free to reach me at spcecil@ua.edu.



Disaster preparedness: Make it part of your practice's work flow

By Wes Stubblefield, MD, MPH, FAAP, Chapter Disaster Preparedness Ambassador



Wes Stubblefield, MD, MPH, FAAP

Over time, the list of items we pediatricians should discuss with our patients and families has grown and continues to grow. Although I am proposing to add something else, I hope that you may consider implementing some of these ideas with at least a portion of your patients.

Unless you have lived through a disaster, it is hard to realize how unprepared most of us are. Imagine yourself as a parent of a child with developmental delays, special health care needs, chronic medical issues, medical complexity, technology dependence, or functional/access needs.

As you know, disasters affect children in unique ways due to their inherent vulnerabilities. When you consider the breadth of disasters that might affect us in Alabama, it becomes a daunting task. However, a brief conversation backed by well-made printed resources might profoundly impact a family's life.

Most of Alabama's disasters in recent decades have been weather-related, such as drought, flooding, excessive heat, ice, tornadoes and tropical weather. With these events come utility disruption, displacement, physical damage, and injury. Families, especially those with children, should have thought about what they would do and where they would go in an emergency.

Preparedness is more than just flashlights. It might mean collecting a small supply of needed medication for three to five days. Some families may need extra batteries for feeding pumps or wheelchairs. Other children may require several days of very specific nutrition unavailable except by order. The ability to have these needs met is dependent on both the resources and the medical

continued on page 9

Disaster preparedness continued from page 8

knowledge of the family. However, both may be limited, further exacerbating the issue.

Through a CDC grant provided to state chapters through the AAP, your Alabama Chapter was able to prepare and exhibit resources to educate community pediatricians on disaster planning. As the Chapter Pediatric Preparedness Ambassador, I have also met with some of our state's Health Care Coalitions and helped put together a webinar featuring some of Alabama's pediatricians and a mother of a child with functional and access needs.

I encourage you to look through the resources and webinar recording (linked here: <https://tinyurl.com/ywaknsj6>), contact the Chapter office if you need printed materials to hand out, and use the information to weave pediatric disaster preparedness into your anticipatory guidance.

You may decide to implement or revisit your office's disaster plan. Another option is to speak with your local EMA/911 office about how your clinic functions to take care of children in your community. You might talk with your local hospital about their plans for surge in case of a disaster and how you might get involved in planning. Finally, you could join the Chapter's Committee on Disaster Preparedness or even the AAP's Council on Children and Disasters.

I'm also excited to announce that we will be doing an interactive tabletop exercise at the Chapter's 2024 Spring Meeting, at which we will go through a disaster scenario and apply some of the principles in the materials on the resource page. Please feel free to contact me at wes.stubblefield@adph.state.al.us at any time with any questions.

Enroll Now! ACHIA launches Healthy Beginnings 2024: An ACHIA Trauma Informed Care and Resiliency Quality Improvement (QI) Collaborative

Cason Benton, MD, FAAP, Director, Alabama Child Health Improvement Alliance (ACHIA)

Toward the end of the last century, groundbreaking work by Vincent Felitti and Robert Anda established that adults with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are much more likely to experience lifelong poor physical and mental health outcomes at the population level. Subsequent research found that unmitigated toxic stress damages and changes the genome resulting in poor health.



Children in Alabama are at risk because of a higher level of stress: one in four live in poverty with 16 percent facing food insecurity.

Yet, adversity is not destiny. We all know children and adults who show remarkable resilience in facing adversity. Research shows that the most powerful mitigating factors for ACEs is experiencing safe, stable, nurturing relationships (SSNRs) and having positive childhood experiences (PCEs.) In addition to buffering toxic stress responses, SSNRs foster adaptive skills to cope with adversity. Rather than focusing on toxic stress for pediatric well-being, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) now strongly recommends pediatricians focus on relational health.

Instead of “summing up the suffering,” we should “build the buffering.”

Specifically, AAP policy urges pediatricians to promote resiliency by integrating three levels of relational health into clinical care.

- For primary prevention, we should universally utilize a strengths-based relational health approach at health supervision visits.
- At the secondary level, we should identify and address barriers to developing SSNRs.
- At the tertiary level, we should connect families and children experiencing toxic stress with appropriate treatments to repair strained relationships.

To assist Alabama practices in honing their trauma-informed/early relational health skills, ACHIA and the AL-AAP hosted Michael Arenson, MD, Research Fellow at the UMass Chan Medical School's Center for Child Equity, as he presented at the AL-AAP Annual Meeting on the pediatrician's role in preventing and responding to toxic stress.

These discussions served as a soft launch for ACHIA's **Healthy Beginnings 2024: An ACHIA Trauma-Informed Care and Resiliency QI Collaborative**. During the collaborative, clinical supervisors will measurably improve strengths-based messaging and add, or enhance, screening and follow-up for perinatal depression, food insecurity, and social-emotional wellness at selected early childhood health supervision visits between December 2023 and August 2024. Pediatricians who participate will engage in in-person meetings with local community organizations, which will foster SSNRs, and referrals resulting from these personal connections are more likely to be successful in leading to “warm handoffs.” Elizabeth Dawson, MD, FAAP, will be the lead content expert and Part 4 MOC points will be awarded to practices for 25 points.

To enroll or learn more about the collaborative, contact Rachel Latham at rlatham@alaap.org. Limited enrollment is available on a first come, first served basis.

Reach Out and Read All About It!

Reach Out and Read-Alabama kicks off end-of-year campaign at Chapter Annual Meeting

As part of ROR-AL's participation at the Alabama Chapter-AAP Annual Meeting, we launched our end-of-year campaign, *If You Give A Child A Book*. Attendees donated \$3,000 during the meeting toward our goal of \$25,000 and five lucky winners took home a Reach Out and Read-Alabama bag of books!

How can you help us reach our goal? Follow our social media campaign on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Donate at <https://tinyurl.com/33d5a9tx> or scan the QR code. Each

donation of \$250 or more will receive a Reach Out and Read-Alabama tote bag!

Share what happens if you give a child a book at a well-child visit with a photo or video and send it Salina at stowell@roralabama.org.



Reach Out and Read-Alabama expanding across the state with recent grant awards Partnership with PATHS continues into 3rd year

Reach Out and Read-Alabama formed a partnership with the PATHS (Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services) Program in 2020. PATHS aims to increase the capacity of primary care providers in rural Alabama to diagnose, treat, and manage mild to moderate behavioral health conditions in children and adolescents. Primary care providers in these communities will be better equipped to address concerns related to pediatric mental health. Book distribution in Alabama began in 2020 with five practices, then expanded in 2021 to four more practices, and now we are supplying books to even more! PATHS is a collaboration between Children's of Alabama and the

Alabama Department of Mental Health. Grant from Children's Trust Fund allows for growth of program

Reach Out and Read-Alabama is excited to announce that we have been awarded a grant by the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama for 2023-24!

"We appreciate the Alabama Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention and the Children's Trust Fund for its support of our program, which will allow us to share the importance of reading with even more of Alabama's children and families!" said Amy Crosby, statewide coordinator.

The Children's Trust Fund provides not only annual funding to community-based child abuse prevention programs throughout the state, but also creates a self-sustaining pool of funds to provide for funding these programs in the future. As Alabama's only state agency designated to prevent child abuse and neglect, its goal is to encourage and support communities in the state in their efforts to find new and effective solutions for preventing child abuse before it occurs, and ultimately strengthening Alabama families to prevent this tragedy in the future.

Stay tuned for more information about

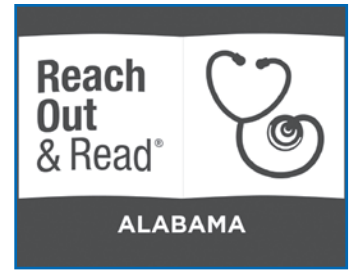
the grant coming soon.

With its 14th annual Summer Campaign, Reach Out and Read-Alabama illustrates the impact that a book can have on a child

If you give a child a book... He is going to want to read it. She will be captivated by the pictures and the text and will want to keep reading to see what happens next. He'll ask you to read it to him again and again, And so you do...

Similar to the well-known children's book, *If You Give A Mouse A Cookie*, which highlights what happens when you give that little mouse a cookie, Reach Out and Read-Alabama's (ROR-AL) 14th annual summer reading campaign answered what takes place "if you give a child a book."

Throughout June and July, 48 ROR-AL sites organized activities and events as part of the "If You Give A Mouse A Cookie" summer campaign. View photos and more information at roralabama.org/rx-for-summer-reading-2023.



Auburn Men's Basketball participated in the Rx for Summer Reading event at Pediatric Clinic, LLC in Opelika

LET'S HEAR IT FROM OUR DEPARTMENTS OF PEDIATRICS!

Department of Pediatrics increases access to subspecialty care with 30 new faculty



By Mitch Cohen, MD, FAAP, Katharine Reynolds Ireland Chair of Pediatrics, University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine; Physician in Chief, Children's of Alabama

Mitch Cohen, MD, FAAP

The Department of Pediatrics is growing. In order to increase access to subspecialty care, we have added

30 new faculty this fiscal year (Oct 1, 2023-Sept 30, 2024). Please join me in welcoming these new colleagues, featured below.



Kalli Vincent, MD, FAAP
Academic General Pediatrics



Callie Grey Giroux, MD, FAAP
Academic General Pediatrics



Luke Benton, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Critical Care



Megan Cotti-Rausch, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Emergency Medicine



Alexandria Edwards, MD
Pediatric Emergency Medicine



Kevin Gutermuth, MD
Pediatric Emergency Medicine



Nicole Jones, MD
Pediatric Emergency Medicine



Tanzeh Metzger, MD
Pediatric Emergency Medicine



Stephanie Pool, MD
Pediatric Emergency Medicine



Sajal Patel, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Endocrinology



Sandeep Gupta, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Gastroenterology



John Sands, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Gastroenterology



Rintaro Hashizume, MD, PhD
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology



Mary Beth Litrell, MD
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology



Loretta Parker, DO
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology



Meghan Harrison, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Hospital Medicine



Elizabeth Mertens, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Hospital Medicine



Andrew Watson, MD
Pediatric Hospital Medicine



Hunter Wilkerson, MD
Pediatric Hospital Medicine



Stephen Obaro, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Infectious Diseases



Maria Rueda-Altez, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Infectious Diseases



Hope Arnold, MD, FAAP
Neonatology



Vivian Luaces, MD, FAAP
Neonatology



Zaki Yazdi, MD, FAAP
Neonatology



Kyle Deville, MD
Pediatric Nephrology



Katherine Thaggard, MD
Pediatric Neurology



Stephen Walker, MD
Pediatric Neurology



Samantha Weaver, DNP
Pediatric Neurology



Mohini Gunnett, MD
Pediatric Pulmonology



John Bridges, MD, FAAP
Pediatric Rheumatology

Peanut Allergy Prevention Through Early Introduction

Over the last decade, research has led the way toward big shifts in recommendations about infant feeding to prevent peanut allergies. The early introduction of peanut foods has the potential to reduce healthcare costs, encourage consumption of affordable and accessible nutrient dense foods and reduce gaps in health equity in this country.

Through this online course, developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, you will learn how to explain early peanut protein introduction to parents and how to prepare infant-friendly peanut-containing foods. The course will also help you effectively respond to common parental questions.

More resources for you and families available at www.PreventPeanutAllergies.org

Provided through support from America's Peanut Farmers

Alabama
Peanut Producers Association

**National
Peanut Board**



*Continuing Education for Credit
Now Available Free to You
and Others Who Care for
Families and Infants



Let's Hear it from Our Departments of Pediatrics continued from page 11

USA Pediatrics: Tribute to beloved faculty members



David Gremse, MD, FAAP

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

It saddens me to relay the news of the passing this year of two beloved Chapter members, Daniel Preud'Homme, MD, FAAP and Cindy Sheets, MD, FAAP.

Dr. Preud'Homme was a valued member in the USA Department of Pediatrics since 2006, when he founded the USA Health Pediatric Healthy Life Center. He was Professor and Medical Director of the Adolescent Clinic in the Department for the past 11 years. In this capacity, he provided an invaluable service to children and pediatricians throughout our community.



Daniel Preud'Homme, MD, FAAP

Dr. Preud'Homme earned his medical degree from the University of Liege in Belgium, then came to the United States for pediatric residency at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, followed by a pediatric gastroenterology fellowship at Columbia University. He served on the faculty at Wright State University and the medical staff at Dayton Children's Hospital before moving to the University of South Alabama in 2006.

He was truly a renaissance man in academic medicine in the Mobile medical community, serving in numerous roles: Course Director of the MS-2 Gastrointestinal and Nutrition Module; the MS1-MS2 Nutrition Thread Leader; the MS1-MS2 Geriatric Thread Leader, Chair of the Quality Improvement Team Leadership Committee, an Adolescent Medicine attending, pediatric gastroenterologist for the Pediatric Bariatric Surgery program, a pediatric hospitalist and as a General Pediatrics Clinic attending. He was a superb clinician and mentor who continuously exuded an enthusiasm for life.

Dr. Sheets was a valued member in the USA Department of Pediatrics since her first appointment as Clinical Instructor in 1986. She was a longtime Adjunct Faculty member in the Department of Pediatrics throughout her career and founded the Reach Out and Read Program at USA Health Pediatrics. Through this service, she provided a loving service for children and their families throughout our community.



Cindy Sheets, MD, FAAP

After graduating from the University of Florida, Dr. Sheets remained there to earn her medical degree, then moved to Yale for a postdoctoral research Fellowship. She completed her pediatric residency and served as pediatric chief resident at Yale, then remained in Connecticut in private practice for a short time prior to moving to the University of South Alabama.

She was a beloved pediatrician and teacher. An example of her impact on learners is exemplified from a quote from one of our former medical students who wrote: "Dr. Sheets is one of the kindest and most approachable attendings in existence. Her bedside manner and interactions with patients and their parents are incomparable to any other. If I had children, she would be my first choice as their pediatrician."

Her passion for childhood literacy and advocacy for children was evident by her becoming among the first pediatricians in Alabama to become a Reach Out and Read provider. There are many children and their families in the region who were touched by her in some way or another over the years through her career. In recognition of her dedication to Reach Out and Read at USA, the University of South Alabama has created the Dr. Cindy S. Sheets Endowment for Early Literacy to provide a sustaining commitment to the Reach Out and Read program at USA.

I am sure that you join me in stating that their loss will be felt throughout the pediatrics community and that we send our deepest sympathies to their friends and family.

Practice Management Association update

By Tonya Pitts, Outgoing PMA Chair

I want to thank everyone who attended this year's Annual Practice Management Association (PMA) business meeting and workshop. It was very productive and informative. We learned about "Assessing for the Right Fit: The Hiring Process" from Andrea Lewis. I know this is a topic that a lot of medical practices have struggled with since the PHE. Brandy Boone gave us updates and refreshed us on "Consent in the Pediatric Practice: Major issues with Minor Patients." Jan Blanchard provided us with updates for the 2023 and 2024 coding changes. We also learned from Dr. Katrina Skinner about the importance of delegating. Lastly, Dr. Nola Earnest gave us tips on recognizing leaders in waiting. These are all topics that we noticed our members showed great interest in over the last year.

I want to recognize our outgoing PMA Executive Committee and let them know how much I appreciate the assistance they provided

Practice Management Association update continued from page 13

me and the PMA over the last two years. Our outgoing Vice Chair, Lisa Luter; Membership Chair, Rosalyn Rowley, and Communications Chair, Lynn Brown. You have all been such a great help.

At the conference, we voted on the new Executive Committee. I know they will do an outstanding job.

The new members of the Committee are: Chair: Lisa Luter, Fairhope Pediatrics, Vice Chair: Tameka Little, Metro Pediatrics, Membership Chair: Henry Lee, Eastern Shore Children's Clinic, Conference Committee Chair: Ciera Paymon, Payne & Holloway

M E D I C A I D N E W S**Help spread message with new shareable videos: Alabama Medicaid recipients must complete their renewal forms when it is their month to renew**

Alabama Medicaid recipients are encouraged to complete their eligibility renewal form when it comes in the mail, even if they think they may not be eligible any longer. If a recipient does not meet the requirements for their current program, they may qualify for other healthcare benefits, such as other Medicaid programs, ALL Kids, or the Federal Marketplace.

The Alabama Medicaid Agency released a video to share with Medicaid recipients which conveys this important message. Medicaid providers are encouraged to share this video in public locations and on websites and social media to spread this message to every corner of the state.

If someone loses their coverage because they didn't return the forms, they can reapply within 90 days to have coverage reinstated if they are still eligible.

Recipients should check their mail regularly for important notices from Medicaid. Contact information must be up to date with the Agency in order to receive notices. To learn how to update an address, phone number, or email address, recipients may visit <https://tinyurl.com/mb6hu7nu>.

Alabama Medicaid has taken extraordinary efforts to notify recipients when it is time to renew. In addition to renewal notices being mailed, the Agency is contacting recipients by email, text message, and phone to let them know it is time to renew (if they have provided that contact information to the Agency).

Several outreach resources have been made available for Medicaid providers to make it simple to share the key messages:

- Public Service Announcement (PSA) - Time to Renew – (One-minute video) – <https://tinyurl.com/ykukt7m3>
- Public Service Announcement (PSA) - Time to Renew – (30-second video) – <https://tinyurl.com/bmrhyb79>
- How to Update Contact Information with the Agency (Medicaid Recipients) – <https://tinyurl.com/mb6hu7nu>
- Video: Keep Your Coverage – <https://tinyurl.com/mr4abkfz>
- Video (Spanish): Keep Your Coverage – <https://tinyurl.com/mr2u5ney>

Medicaid recipients who have questions should call Medicaid's Recipient Call Center at (800) 362-1504 or visit a Medicaid office in their area. Providers may contact the Provider Assistance Center at (800) 688-7989.

Alabama Medicaid seeks Public Health Physician Director

The Alabama Medicaid Agency, Montgomery Central Office, seeks to fill a position of a Public Health Physician Director (40434).

This position is responsible for providing clinical leadership and guidance to Alabama Medicaid in coordination with the Commissioner's office. This highly advanced professional, administrative, and medical position involves providing guidance on medical-related services within the Agency. Work involves assisting Agency officials in making determinations of level and quality of medical care provided to recipients by healthcare providers. Duties also include serving as a medical consultant in the development and modification of healthcare policies and procedures, and the implementation of healthcare delivery systems statewide. Work is performed with a high degree of independence and professional judgment. This is a great opportunity for a physician who wants to provide clinical guidance in an administrative setting.

The position offers a competitive salary and benefits, including: a desirable work schedule (40-hour work week, typically Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.); health insurance coverage (medical, dental and vision); and paid time off (including state holidays, annual and sick time).

If you are interested in this position, please call Alabama Medicaid at (334) 242-5600 for more information.

NEWS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH

By Wes Stubblefield, MD, MPH, FAAP, District Medical Officer, Northern/Northeastern Districts, Alabama Department of Public Health

Mosquitoes are simply a part of life for those of us who live in the South. More than just annoying, we know that mosquitoes can carry dangerous diseases. So far in 2023, ADPH has been notified of 19 cases of West Nile Virus and three cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis, all of which were acquired in Alabama. One of the cases of EEE was fatal. The three EEE cases were in the Baldwin County area and the WNV cases have been spread across the state.

Generally, it is good practice to recommend eliminating breeding areas for mosquitoes by mitigating standing water on properties. However, the EEE mosquitoes are “swamp” insects and do not generally breed in this manner. Therefore, municipal spraying and personal protection are best practices. Importantly, these mosquitoes are dawn and dusk feeders.

In your practices, we would ask that you counsel your families and patients on the importance of protecting themselves at the highest risk times for mosquito bites by wearing protective clothing or avoiding exposure and discuss best practices for using and applying insect repellants.

Please visit <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/mosquito/> for updated numbers and <https://www.cdc.gov/fight-the-bite/at-risk/index.html> for historical data and maps. I can be reached at wes.stubblefield@adph.state.al.us.

CHAPTER BRIEFS

Chapter works to change the immunizations conversation

Following the May 2023 Association of Immunization Managers’ Vaccine Access Cooperative Regional Meeting in New Orleans, the Alabama team, led by Norma Mobley, MD, FAAP, Chapter Vice President, and Brooke Haynes, MD, FAAP, Chapter Immunization Champion, is moving forward as the Alabama Vaccine Advisory Committee to begin to address vaccine hesitancy in Alabama communities. The short-term goal is to set up trainings for community health workers who have direct contact with people in the community. This will be a parallel effort in the Chapter’s work to build a group of pro-immunization advocates. Stay tuned for more details, coming soon!

Dawson spreads message of partnerships to build child resiliency

Elizabeth Dawson, MD, FAAP, lead physician for the Chapter’s 2022-2023 child resiliency initiative, spoke at the national Prevent Child Abuse America conference recently as well as at the Alabama

Children’s Trust Fund grantee training in mid-October. She shared about the Chapter’s four regional breakfast roundtables for pediatricians and parent resource/home-visiting providers, held in December/January, and also shared about how pediatricians and their counterparts will participate in similar roundtables as part of the 2024 trauma-informed/resiliency collaborative beginning in December 2023 (see page 9 for details).

Kane receives 2023 AMA Inspiration Award

Andrea Kane, MD, FAAP, UAB Assistant Professor, Division of Pediatric Neonatology, received a 2023 Inspiration Award from the American Medical Association (AMA) Women Physicians Section.

The Inspiration Award is given to physicians who have mentored and supported fellow physicians throughout their career.

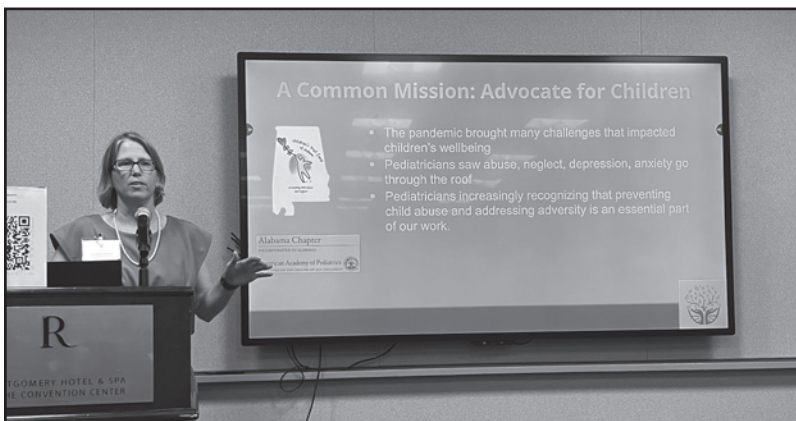
“I’m honored to receive the Inspiration Award,” said Dr. Kane. “I am the

neonatologist I am now, in large part, because of the mentors and teachers who have inspired me. I am lucky that I can now help guide others as they develop into the pediatricians and neonatologists they aspire to be.”

Dr. Kane was nominated by neonatology fellow, Kylee Miller, MD. “I have learned so much from Dr. Kane’s interactions with families, commitment to education, and thoughtfulness in patient care, and I hope to be able to teach, support, and encourage others in the same way in the future,” wrote Dr. Miller.



Andrea Kane, MD, FAAP



Alabama Chapter

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ARMSA

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The Alabama Rural Medical Service Award (ARMSA) incentivizes primary care physicians and NPs to practice in rural, medically-underserved areas in Alabama. Eligible PCPs receive \$50,000 a year and NPs receive \$30,000 a year for up to 3 years as a service loan payable by years of service. PCP and NP must not have practiced in the rural area within 3 years of October 1, 2023.

We're looking for NPs in family medicine and for physicians in the primary care fields of:

- family medicine
- general pediatrics
- internal medicine
- internal medicine/pediatrics

ARMSA is administered by the Alabama Office of Primary Care and Rural Health and is supported by the Office for Family Health Education & Research, UAB Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine

For details visit <https://aohw.org/2022-armsa>
or email ARMSA@uabmc.edu

Apply for ARMSA today!



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