



The Alabama Pediatrician

Issue #4 2020

From the President

Looking ahead to 2021 with hope



Katrina Skinner, MD, FAAP
Chapter President

While the most tumultuous year of our medical careers comes to a close, I hope that you are able to find time to reflect on your blessings and enjoy the comfort of your family. 2020 has left no life untouched, no community unscathed. But it has also given us an opportunity to

refocus our sights for our personal, professional, and advocacy goals, and while we may not have achieved 20/20 vision just yet, I hope that we can take some of the lessons this year has taught us to move forward into the new year with renewed hope.

Your Chapter will continue to serve the children of this state, and the pediatricians who care for them. We will continue to partner with state agencies like ADPH and the State Department of Education to implement policies that protect and support our patients. We will continue to meet with payers like Alabama Medicaid and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama to request fair payment for Alabama pediatricians.

We will continue to roll out pertinent and timely educational opportunities for our members through channels that are safe and effective. We will support the continuing education needs of our membership through QI projects that provide CME and MOC credit.

We are developing our 2021 legislative agenda, which will mirror our strategic priorities to support you and Alabama children, especially in the face of the impacts of COVID-19.

We here at the Chapter are so thankful for you! It is our collective voice that makes all of these efforts possible. Please know that we are grateful for the work that you do and look forward to our continued partnership in the new year.

Chapter will focus on improving policies for children, especially those affected by pandemic, in 2021 legislative session

By Nola Jean Ernest, MD, FAAP, Chapter Legislative Chair and Vice President/President-elect

With the COVID-19 pandemic raging on at time of writing, it is hard to put our fingers on what the advocacy process or schedule will look like for the 2021 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature (set to begin on February 2). But whatever the format, one thing is certain: the Chapter will advocate for you and the children you serve, and will be calling on you to help us contact your representatives at important moments in the process.

The Executive Board will vote on the Chapter's 2021 state Legislative Agenda at its meeting on January 9 and will release it soon thereafter. In its draft form, the agenda focuses on:

- Assuring funding for Medicaid for children and their parents who fall into the coverage gap;
- Advocating for funding for children's mental needs, which are more prevalent than ever thanks to the pandemic;
- Increasing vaccination rates;
- Protecting the medical home for children; and
- Adequately funding services for birth to five.

The final legislative agenda will be included in our annual Blueprint for Child Health & Well-Being, which is also being drafted.

We welcome "new blood" in helping us advocate for children. Drop me an email at nola.ernest@gmail.com if you would like to get more involved and we will plug you in to the process.

2021 Chapter Conferences: What can we expect?

At time of writing, the pandemic is raging on. What does this mean for our conferences in 2021?

2021 Spring Meeting & Pediatric Update

For now, the 2021 Spring Meeting & Pediatric Update is still scheduled for **April 22-25, 2021 at the Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort**. At this time, the hotel is not allowing a cancellation without penalty and we are hopeful that we will see improvements in the numbers of COVID cases by that time. Meanwhile, the hotel assures a number of safety meeting practices to assure that distancing and proper sanitization is in place.

Although planning continues, we WILL be revisiting the plan every month leading up to the conference. Of course, we have a back-up plan! In 2020, we found out we are pretty good at virtual education, and we will have this option if we find that meeting face to face is not going to be reasonable or safe.

Either way, please mark your calendars, because the meeting will be held that

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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.

Reflections of Chapter HPV project from pediatricians across the state

The Alabama Chapter-AAP's HPV Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Project, Increasing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine Coverage by Strengthening Adolescent Immunization Quality Improvement Program (IQIP) Activities, is coming to an end. All 50 practices have completed the program, which was a huge success in raising awareness and rates of HPV vaccination.

While we anxiously await the six-month aggregate data, the team wanted to share what some of the pediatricians thought was most beneficial about the program:

- “Using the 3 C’s of connect, clarify, and counsel when talking to hesitant parents. Also, giving the vaccine at sick visits.” – Dr. Shrestha, Primary Care Pediatrics and Family Medicine
- “The program was very helpful and made us vigilant about the vaccine. Every time a patient came in the office we talked about the vaccine.” – Dr. Roca, Horizon Health Care
- “Knowing the Alabama statistics helped, presenting it more routinely instead of being more of an add-on, and cleaning up ImmPRINT helped our numbers also.” – Dr. Breedlove and McAfee, Acton Pediatrics
- “The initiative brought in more awareness of the vaccine and its preventive measures. We put up more posters up and provided more handouts.” – Brianna Whitaker, Willow Tree Pediatrics
- “Checking immunization records for every visit to decrease missed opportunities and pre-booking their six-month HPV second dose vaccine.” – Dr. Martin, Pediatric Care Center
- “The techniques taught were effective.” – Dr. De La Cruz, Talladega Pediatrics
- “I am seeing the acceptance of HPV vaccine increase dramatically as we continue to promote it with improved awareness and accurate information. My panel’s HPV vaccinations improved significantly.” – Dr. Wilbanks, Wilbanks Pediatrics
- “It was a great project and a great educational opportunity to train ancillary staff.” – Dr. Tibbetts, Simon-Williamson Clinic
- “Explaining the facts and figures was very helpful, especially when the Alabama statistics are so horrible, and then it was very impactful to present it as a cancer prevention vaccine. Parents seemed to get it more when the vaccine was presented that way.” – Dr. Schroder, Alabaster Pediatrics
- “I liked the suggestions for talking points for parents.” – Dr. Lunsford, Internal Medicine and Pediatric
- “The program made us focus more on giving the HPV vaccine specifically and made us more aware to follow up on kids who were not complete with the series. The providers are now better at educating the parents about the benefits of the vaccine.” – Anniston Pediatrics

Stay tuned for the full report, which will be shared via the Chapter e-newsletter as well as the next issue of *The Alabama Pediatrician*!

2021 Chapter Conferences continued from page 1

weekend regardless of the format!

Topics will include an update on the COVID vaccine, child death review, and many others. The list is being finalized at time of writing.

2021 Annual Meeting & Fall Pediatric Update

Also, please mark your calendars for our 2021 Annual Meeting & Fall Pediatric Update, set for September 24-26, 2021 at The Sheraton Birmingham. The same approach to meeting planning will occur for this conference, although we are hopeful that the pandemic numbers will have significantly improved by then, thanks to the introduction of the vaccine.

PATHS Program: an update after two years of improving access to behavioral healthcare for Alabama children

The PATHS (Pediatric Access to Telemental Health Services) program, administered by Children's of Alabama, is a result of a five-year, \$2.09 million federal grant from HRSA, awarded to the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH), to improve access to pediatric mental health services in rural areas of Alabama. The program goals are to improve access to behavioral health care by providing education and training to pediatricians to better equip them to take care of behavioral health patients and facilitating earlier identification, diagnosis and treatment of children with behavioral health disorders.

PATHS offers behavioral health education for primary care providers, via the Project ECHO model of telementoring, behavioral health resources, care coordination, provider-to-provider consultation, and telemedicine appointments for patients in rural primary care practices.

The program enrolls primary care providers and their clinical staff in rural communities throughout Alabama. Enrollment is currently restricted to rural providers.

PATHS provides a dedicated phone number specifically for enrolled practices to use for consultation. The multi-disciplinary team of behavioral health providers are available for consultation, depending on the question posed by the primary care provider.

The following providers are available to respond to consultation requests: child psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, clinical psychologist, licensed professional counselor, and clinical social workers, one of whom is a care coordinator and one who is an infant/early childhood mental health consultant.

Currently, PATHS is funded through a contract with the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH), who received a five-year grant from HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) for this collaborative work. In addition, up to 20 percent is funded through non-governmental sources.

Year 2 of the program ended in September 2020; here are a few highlights of the program's first two years:

Project ECHO

Collaborative education sessions with didactic presentations and case studies have been conducted in three Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) series (Fall 2019, Summer 2020, and Fall 2020) with a total of 21 presentations on various behavioral health topics. Topics have included anger management, ADHD, anxiety, psych testing, trauma, and others.

Participating practices

Thus far, 16 practices have participated. Here are a few comments from the participants:

- "It is probably the most worthwhile time doctors and nurses spend to further and hone their clinical skills. Thank you for what you do." – Lotfi Bashir, MD, FAAP, Selma Pediatrics
- "ECHO has done more to help us treat mental health issues than anything else. We recently had a crisis with a patient, and my whole team knew just what to do because we have participated in ECHO. We handled it fine!" – Eric Tyler, MD, FAAP, Pediatric Associates of Alexander City

If you are in a rural practice and are interested in joining PATHS in the coming year, please contact Susan Griffin, Pediatric Telemental Health Network Project Manager, at susan.griffin@childrensal.org or (205) 638-5673. Additional information can also be found at www.childrensal.org/paths.

How to Contact Your Chapter Leaders

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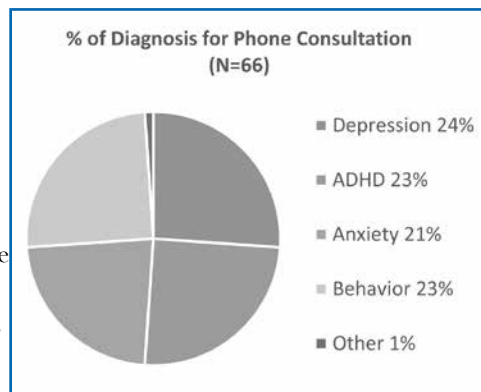
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Early Career Spotlight: Seeing the details without losing the big picture!

By Nola Jean Ernest, MD, PhD, FAAP, Chapter Early Career Pediatrician Representative



Cassandra Smola, MD, FAAP

Here's to the end of 2020 and another opportunity to spotlight the amazing young pediatricians of Alabama!

This quarter, we would like to introduce you to Cassandra "Cassi" Smola, MD, FAAP. Dr. Smola is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Although she was born in Colorado, Dr. Smola considers herself an Alabama native. She is a graduate of Auburn University (War Eagle!) and completed both medical school and residency at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

In her current role, she has the opportunity to pursue her passions: teaching students and residents and caring for hospitalized children, especially those with cleft and craniofacial anomalies. One area of synergistic research that Dr. Smola has pursued is studying effective methods for teaching diagnostic ear and eye examination skills to residents. Her other research interests surround prevention of post-surgical infections in patients undergoing craniofacial surgery and examining associations between cleft laterality and learning delays. Her work has been fundamental in helping Children's of Alabama

earn accreditation for its craniofacial program.

Dr. Smola is described by her peers as "a caring, intelligent, and thorough physician" and "an exceptional hospitalist because she sees the details without losing the big picture."

"In addition to her hospitalist work, she's also a great teacher and mentor and is a fantastic pediatrics clerkship director for fourth-year medical students at UAB," wrote another colleague.

Caring for children does not end when Dr. Smola leaves the hospital; she also has five-year old identical twin girls at home who keep her entertained. With seemingly boundless energy, Dr. Smola and her husband also love to travel and have been fortunate to visit over 20 countries. They have passed on their love for adventure – from trying new foods to snow skiing – to their girls.

On top of all of that, she serves as Pediatric Residency Program Faculty Representative to the Chapter Executive Board!

We are so grateful that Dr. Smola has continued to share her passions here in Alabama and we appreciate her contribution to the work of the Alabama Chapter.

If you would like to "spotlight" a young pediatrician in an upcoming article, please email me at nola.ernest@gmail.com to request more information.

Save the Date!

Saturday, February 6 2021
via **zoom**

(Virtual) Practical Day of Pediatrics



TOPICS

- Common Orthopedic Problems
- Weight Management
- ADHD Updates
- Covid Updates for the Primary Care Pediatrician
- Children's Leadership Q & A



Children's
of Alabama



UAB MEDICINE

in collaboration with the
Jefferson County Pediatric Society

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

LET'S HEAR IT FROM OUR DEPARTMENTS OF PEDIATRICS!

Introducing Erin Shaughnessy, Division Director Pediatric Hospital Medicine, and other faculty



Mitch Cohen, MD, FAAP

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

Erin Shaughnessy, MD, MSHCM, FAAP, became the second division director in Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM) at UAB Pediatrics and Children's of Alabama (COA) effective September 1, 2020. She succeeded Bob Pass, MD, FAAP, who was the founding director. Dr. Shaughnessy came from Phoenix Children's Hospital (PCH) and the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix. Prior to her work at PCH, she was an Assistant Professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI, and at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (CCHMC) and the University of Cincinnati, where she also completed her pediatric residency.

She graduated from Duke University School of Medicine and attained an A.B. in English from Princeton. She then earned a Master of Science in Healthcare Management from the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

Dr. Shaughnessy's professional activities include her active participation in organizations such as the Society for Pediatric Sedation, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Society of Hospital Medicine, and her service as Co-Chair of the Hospital Medicine Special Interest Group of the Academic Pediatric Association and Co-Chair of the PHM Meeting 2020. Her national leadership in the professional societies of the young specialty of PHM has put her at the forefront of clinical and academic leaders in this field. Dr. Shaughnessy has been active in comparative effectiveness and health services research, including patient- and family-centered rounds and pediatric hospital medicine co-management. PHM is a lynchpin of our connections to primary care pediatricians and we hope you will get to know her (in person) soon. We welcome her to UAB and COA!

I am also pleased to introduce other new faculty who have arrived in the last year. Scan the QR code for a montage of photos!

USA Pediatrics launches inaugural issue of *Variegated*, the official newsletter of The Diversity Coalition



David Gremse, MD, FAAP

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

Deriving its strength from its diversity, which enriches the skills, characteristics and attributes of our members, the University of South Alabama (USA) Department of Pediatrics is proud to launch its first newsletter that specifically celebrates the diversity that exists within

the Department.

We congratulate Kanya Singhapakdi, J.C. Gonzalez, Kristina Rossetti, and Marley Harris for creating the inaugural issue of *Variegated*, the official newsletter of the Diversity Coalition of the USA Department of Pediatrics. Myria Mack-Williams, MD, FAAP, Associate Program Director of the Pediatric Residency Program, leads the Diversity Coalition with the assistance of LaTasha Williams, our Pediatric Residency Program Coordinator.

Dr. Singhapakdi was inspired to serve as editor for *Variegated* following the tragic events of this year. As she states in the editor's forward, the first issue takes steps toward building a foundation of awareness and expanding our vocabulary as it pertains to diversity, equity, and inclusion. She sums it up by challenging readers to think of it as going to a dance, likening diversity to inviting everyone to the party, equity to allowing all to contribute to the playlist, and inclusion to giving everybody the opportunity to dance.

As pediatricians, we see the damaging effects of racism on children and their families. For the benefit of all children, the USA Department of Pediatrics pledges to do its part to fight racism as well as all forms of discrimination in children's lives. In particular, we commit to working with others to eliminate racial disparities in healthcare. We pledge to do our part to create a society where all children can grow up with the same expectation of safety, health, and opportunity.



Erin Shaughnessy, MD, MSHCM, FAAP



NEWS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH

Alabama shortens home quarantine for some contacts

In December, the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) announced that the length of home quarantine for people with expected close contacts to COVID-19 cases can end after the tenth day for some individuals without testing, provided they have experienced no symptoms during the daily required monitoring period and they follow the additional requirements. The change was effective December 11.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) asked states to review their COVID-19 situations, including their ability to handle an increase in demand for SARS-CoV-2 testing, to consider reducing the length of home quarantine. The CDC offered states the option of ending quarantine after seven days with testing, but ADPH determined this option is not feasible at this time due to a number of factors that include significant community spread that is not adequately mitigated, high case numbers, the increasing COVID-19 positivity rate in Alabama, and disparities and shortages in testing availability in areas of the state.

State Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris noted that ADPH will continue to monitor the situation and evaluate whether it may eventually be feasible to adopt an option to shorten the quarantine period to seven days after an individual receives a negative COVID-19 test.

In cases in which the 10-day option is taken, quarantined people must follow these additional requirements:

- Daily symptom monitoring must not show any clinical evidence of COVID-19 throughout the full 10 days of quarantine.
- Daily symptom monitoring past 10 days must continue through quarantine Day 14; and,
- People must strictly adhere to all recommended non-pharmaceutical interventions through quarantine Day 14. They must immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health department or healthcare provider to report if symptoms develop at any time after their last known exposure, and testing should be considered with any of the following symptoms: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

Health officials caution that the 10-day quarantine option is not without risk, and a 14-day quarantine is optimal. That is because the residual post-quarantine transmission risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19 is estimated to be between 1 and 10 percent when quarantine ends after Day 10. Quarantine requirements for residents of long-term care and correctional facilities will not change from the current 14-day period.

For additional information concerning the CDC's quarantine guidance, please go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>.

Fifteen Alabama sites receive Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, with healthcare providers prioritized for vaccination first

[The following information is up to date at time of writing: Dec. 15, 2020]. After receiving emergency use authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Alabama's initial allocation of 40,950 doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine arrived in the state in mid-December. This first allotment was distributed to 15 hospitals to vaccinate frontline health workers, including clinical and non-clinical employees, in hospitals, and other healthcare workers, including physicians.

Chosen for their ability to handle ultracold storage of the vaccine, the following hospitals began accepting appointments by healthcare providers: Athens-Limestone Hospital, Athens; Baptist Medical Center South, Montgomery; Cullman Regional Medical Center, Cullman; DCH Regional Medical Center, Tuscaloosa; East Alabama Medical Center, Opelika; Huntsville Hospital, Huntsville; Lake Martin Community Hospital, Dadeville; Mobile Infirmary, Mobile; Providence Hospital, Mobile; Southeast Health, Dothan; Springhill Memorial Hospital, Mobile; Thomas Hospital, Fairhope; UAB Hospital, Birmingham; USA Health University Hospital, Mobile; and USA Children's & Women's Hospital, Mobile.

The current allocation for administration is 50 percent for hospital healthcare workers, 15 percent for EMS providers, 15 percent for physician offices, and 20 percent for other hospital staff not associated with the point of distribution. ADPH follows ACIP recommendations regarding administration to people in Phase 1a, currently identified as healthcare providers and residents of long-term care (the latter are being vaccinated through the Federal Pharmacy Program in cooperation with large chain pharmacies).

Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine requires two doses separated by 21 days, and a recall system for second doses has been established. Additional vaccine doses of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are expected at weekly intervals, and the second doses of the vaccine will be included in follow-up allocations. A recall system has been established to ensure follow-up doses.

Information regarding the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine's side effect profile indicated that some recipients had pain at the site of injection, headaches, fever, muscle aches and chills. These were seen more with the second dose than the first dose and were reported to resolve over one to two days. Mechanisms are in place to monitor

Reach Out and Read All About It!

By Salina Taylor, Development and Communications Coordinator

Reach Out and Read-Alabama continues to provide connections

In a year in which we've learned the art of physical distancing and maintaining health and safety guidelines, one thing has become



abundantly clear:

We need connection.

And Reach Out and

Read-Alabama's pediatric

healthcare providers have continued [#makingconnections](#) and

[#buildingbrains](#) throughout 2020 by prescribing books and

support for families to understand their children's developing

milestones. Those connections made in the pediatric healthcare

office then continue in homes as parents read books with their young children, fostering healthy brain development and creating parent-child bonds that last a lifetime.

Do you remember sitting in your parent's lap reading your favorite children's book together and the feelings that that simple connection evoked? This year, more than any other, reading

together has provided children and families with a sense of normalcy when nothing feels normal at all.

With your donation today to ROR-AL's end-of-year campaign, YOU can provide those memories and connections for Alabama's children through the end of 2020 and into 2021! Make your connection today at <https://bit.ly/3hz8Znx>.



Public Health continued from page 6

for vaccine side effects.

Vaccine safety is an important aspect of provision of any product. ADPH will follow information from CDC related to any potential adverse events from COVID-19 vaccine as is done with other vaccines. Hospitals will also follow CDC/FDA/ADPH information as it is received. ADPH does not plan to require COVID-19 vaccine, nor is anyone mandating immunization, but Alabama hospitals are encouraging staff most at risk for exposure to do so.

All entities providing COVID-19 vaccine are required to enroll in Alabama's Immunization Patient Registry with Integrated Technology (ImmPRINT) for ordering, documentation, and tracking of vaccine doses. More entities have completed ImmPRINT enrollment and others are in the process of enrolling each day.

In the coming days and weeks, ADPH expects additional allocations of the Pfizer product. As any additional vaccine product receives EUA, processes to receive, store and administer will be followed, appropriate to the vaccine product. ADPH will update as new information becomes available.

Editor's note: Please see the Medical Association's toolkit for physicians here: <https://bit.ly/3moZDxb>. The toolkit includes a stratified list of office-based physicians prioritized to get the vaccine first, information on obtaining appointments at the 15 identified hospitals, and instructions on becoming a provider of the Moderna vaccine, due to be approved by the FDA at any time. The Chapter is also monitoring what this means for pediatricians; as you know, the vaccines are currently not indicated for children.

Event Calendar

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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Medical Director position available

The Alabama Medicaid Agency, Montgomery Central Office, is seeking to fill a position of a Public Health Physician Director (40434), a Medical Director position responsible for providing clinical leadership and guidance to the Alabama Medicaid Agency in coordination with the Commissioner's Office. This highly advanced professional, administrative, and medical position involves providing assistance to Agency officials in making determinations of level and quality of medical care provided to recipients. Duties also include serving as medical consultant on healthcare policies and procedures, and the implementation of healthcare delivery systems statewide.

Competitive benefits and salary.

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

Practice Management Association update

By Carol Aiken, PMA Outgoing Chair

The annual meeting of the Alabama Chapter-AAP Practice Management Association, originally set for September, was held Dec. 4 because of severe weather conditions. Thirty members attended.

Elections were held for the PMA's Executive Committee (see list below) and members are ready to begin planning educational webinars and moving the organization forward in 2021 after a challenging year for all medical practices. With the cancellation of PMA's Practice Management Workshop in September, conference speakers engaged for the 2020 meeting have agreed to move to 2021.

Is your practice manager not involved in the PMA? He or she can sign up on the Chapter website and begin networking with managers across the state!

Visit <https://www.alaap.org/practice-management-association-who-we-are>.

2020-2021 AAP PMA Executive Committee
Chair: Lori Coletta, Over the Mountain Pediatrics
1st Vice Chair: VACANT
2nd Vice Chair: Gena Allen, South Baldwin Pediatrics
Secretary/Treasurer: Stephanie Hancock, Midtown Pediatrics
Communications Chair: Lynn Brown, CPC, Children's of Alabama
Immediate Past President: Carol Aiken, Smith Family Clinic for Genomic Medicine

Coding

O Documentation changes for 2021

by Lynn Abernathy Brown, CPC

Along with many of you, I heard Kim Huey speak in late November during the PMA webinar about the upcoming Evaluation and Management 2021 coding changes, "Getting Ready for 2021: Coding Changes, Including New Office Visit Rules," and I was very appreciative of the effort she put into making this a pediatric-specific presentation. She provided pediatric-specific

examples and offered great explanations of how a provider could arrive at his or her coding level.

I hope everyone who was not able to attend will access the recorded presentation on the [alaap.org](https://www.alaap.org) website. It can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2JLUaU2>.

It is worth taking the time to listen to this pediatric-specific presentation!

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.

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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.

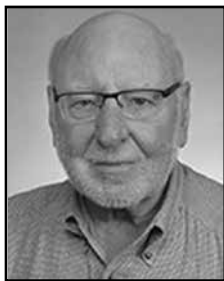


alabamapublichealth.gov/imm



CHAPTER BRIEFS

Dr. Whitley receives 2020 NFID John P. Utz Leadership Award



Richard Whitley, MD, FAAP

Richard Whitley, MD, FAAP, UAB Pediatric Infectious Diseases, has been selected as the recipient of the 2020 National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) John P. Utz Leadership Award, which recognizes Dr.

Whitley's leadership in the field of clinical virology and infectious diseases.

The award was established by the NFID in 2007 as a lasting memorial to the late John P. Utz, MD, a champion in the fight against infectious diseases. The award is presented to individuals who exemplify leadership in the field of infectious diseases, as selected by the NFID Board of Directors.

"John Utz has been a hero in infectious diseases. All of us who practice this specialty emulate his contributions," Dr. Whitley commented. "This is very much an honor."

The award was presented on December 14 at the virtual 2020 Awards Gala. Congratulations, Dr. Whitley!

Dr. Coyne-Beasley to serve on the Governing Council of NCD Child



Tamera Coyne-Beasley, MD, MPH, FAAP

Tamera Coyne-Beasley, MD, MPH, FAAP, UAB Division of Adolescent Medicine, has been invited to serve on the NCD Child Governing Council. NCD Child is a global child and adolescent health organization working to champion the rights and needs of children and adolescents living with or at risk

of developing non-communicable diseases (NCD). The Governing Council works to establish policies and strategies that support NCD Child's mission and goals.

Kudos, Dr. Coyne-Beasley!

In Memoriam: Gerald Woodruff, MD, FAAP

The Alabama Chapter-AAP leadership is sad to learn of the death of Gerald Woodruff, MD, FAAP, of Anniston, Ala., former Chapter "Chairman" (the position is now President) of the AL-AAP from 1989 to 1991. He was born on January 26, 1928 and passed away on July 31, 2020.

His colleague, Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP, former Chapter Chairman and president of the American Academy of Pediatrics from 2003 to 2004, provided this "look-back" on his life and impact on pediatrics:

Gerald was the quintessential southern gentleman who had a smile on his face while holding himself and others to high standards of honesty, compassion, learning and enjoyment of life. A leading pediatrician in Anniston, he always was a supporter of local, state and national pediatric organizations.

His dedication led him to be a member of the Alabama Chapter-AAP board when, during his tenure, he undertook the unrewarding, difficult task of rewriting the constitution and bylaws of our Chapter. After being elected Chairman (president), he was then recognized by his peers of the AAP's District X, resulting in service as a member of the National Nominating Committee, which decides candidates for the AAP Presidency. His skills, personality and integrity helped form the Alabama Chapter into the organization it is today.

I met him when I was a resident at Tulane, which is the same program in which he had trained a few years before. It was at a national AAP meeting in Chicago where he invited our mentor, Dr. Ralph Platou, to dinner at the Cape Cod Room at the Drake Hotel. Dr. Platou suggested he invite the Tulane residents who were attending, allowing me to dine with a frontline, caring primary care pediatrician and one of the leading academic pediatricians of the world. Obviously, it made quite an impression on me.

As I recall, Gerald served in the military at Madigan Army Hospital in Tacoma. While there, he visited the nearby, magnificent Mt. Rainier. By happenstance, as he was hiking, an experienced climber asked Gerald to summit with him. The person was Jim Whittaker, the first American to summit Mt. Everest. Gerald relayed that it was an unhuman, exhausting, terrifying experience. His advice to me was "Don't do it." Even though he was in the fittest time of his life, it took him many days to physically recover.

Gerald spent a year at the Hospital for Sick Children in London, which was a, if not the, leading children's hospital of the world. It was the first Children's Hospital of the English-speaking world, with fundraisers such as Charles Dickens and George Handel. While there, he met Professor Eric Stroud, who later became knighted by the queen. Gerald nominated Professor Sir Eric Stroud to become an honorary member of the AAP, hosted him to be a speaker at Children's Hospital Grand Rounds and the Alabama Chapter meeting. Gerald campaigned for him to be chosen as the International Health Speaker at the annual meeting of the national AAP.

Gerald had to move his historic home from downtown Anniston, which was undergoing renovation. He moved it to Booger Hollow, an isolated community with Brandt Ayers, Pulitzer Prize winner and editor of the Anniston Star, one of Alabama's more liberal newspapers.

Gerald was an enthusiastic tennis player, having a court on the grounds at Booger Hollow. His southern mansion saw many gatherings of family and friends.

Gerald was a leader, not only in pediatrics, but in life itself.

— Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP



Gerald G. Woodruff, MD, FAAP

Medicaid News

COVID-19 vaccine information for providers

The Alabama Medicaid Agency has information available for providers regarding the administration of COVID-19 vaccines approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration on the Agency website under the Providers tab at <https://medicaid.alabama.gov>.

Cost of the vaccines are covered by the federal government. Alabama Medicaid will reimburse a vaccine administration fee to Medicaid providers who use federally-allocated COVID-19 vaccines. The payment rates are published in a recent Provider ALERT at www.Medicaid.Alabama.gov (click Newsroom and ALERTs from the drop-down menu).

Consideration was given for the costs involved in administering the vaccine, including the additional resources involved with required public health reporting, conducting important outreach and patient education, and spending additional time with patients to answer any questions they may have about the vaccine.

To receive, administer, and report COVID-19 vaccines, healthcare providers must enroll in the Alabama Department of Public Health's (ADPH) ImmPRINT COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Follow the steps in the ImmPRINT Registration Roadmap to enroll at www.alabamapublichealth.gov.

ADPH also offers COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Support at the following link: <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/immunization/covid-vaccine-administration.html>.

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Pediatrics "goes green" for National Injury Prevention Day!



Staff and pediatricians from Franklin Primary Health of Mobile, including Chapter member Lucy Culpepper, MD (center) participate in recognizing National Injury Prevention Day.

Melissa Huff, DNP, CRNP, LaDonna Crews, MD, FAAP, Kari Bradham, DO, FAAP and Katrina Trammell, MD, FAAP, of USA Pediatrics, wear green to raise awareness about injury prevention.



Alabama Medicaid dental fee increase also impacts medical 1st Look providers

By Richard A Simpson, DMD, Chapter Oral Health Representative/Liaison to the Alabama Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

The Alabama Medicaid Agency has approved dental fee increases for the most commonly utilized procedure codes, effective Jan. 1, 2021. This will be the first increase in reimbursement rates for dental providers in 21 years. The increases vary by procedure, but the average increase is 12 percent. This change was implemented in an effort to both help ensure adequate access to care through retaining current providers as well as encouraging new dental providers to join the program. Targeted increases were more substantial in specific areas to achieve the greatest benefit for the investment, such as early risk assessment, prevention, and mitigation of early childhood caries.

Participating physicians who are trained and certified providers in the Alabama Medicaid 1st Look Program also stand to benefit significantly from the dental fee increases. The reimbursement for Oral Evaluation <3yrs (D0145) is increasing 20 percent from \$22.00 to \$26.40, and for Topical Application of Fluoride Varnish (D1206) the increase is 45 percent, from \$18 to \$26.10. So, physicians who perform an initial Oral Health Risk Assessment and application of fluoride varnish at a scheduled well-child exam (i.e. nine-month or 12-month) for high caries-risk infants who have not yet seen a dentist will be reimbursed \$52.50 for this service.

If you and your practice are currently participating in the 1st Look program and billing these services, then "thank you!" and congratulations on the increased reimbursement. For those of you not participating, please consider taking the online training and certification through the Alabama Medicaid program (ALL Kids recognizes certification as well) and incorporating this service routinely as an integral part of your infant health services as recommended by Bright Futures. The link is available on the Alabama Chapter-AAP website at <https://www.alaap.org/oral-health-risk-assessment-module>.

Imagine what an additional \$52.50 for the majority of your Medicaid patients' nine- or 12-month well-child checks could do for your bottom line annually! More importantly, numerous studies confirm that an infant oral health risk assessment and prevention education, application of a fluoride varnish, and referral to a dental home by age one can reduce dental caries in infants and pre-school age children by 50 percent! Join the 1st Look Program and have a significant impact on reducing the most common chronic disease of childhood! Email Linda Champion at lchampion@alaap.org for more information.

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