



# The Alabama Pediatrician

Fall 2007

## From the Chapter President



A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP  
Chapter President

Greetings to all chapter members, Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president for the next two years. My goal is to build on the successes and foundations laid

by our previous and current board members, committee chairs and presidents.

Over the next two years, I will strive to improve the plight of the Alabama pediatrician as well as the Alabama child. Both pediatricians and children in Alabama have made vast strides since I first came to Alabama in 1978. However, we cannot rest on our laurels; not only are challenges still present, but they are also forever changing.

We as pediatricians must become savvy, both politically and as community advocates. While the challenges we face can be addressed in individual practices, they must be solved at the boardroom table, at forums, and at the Legislature.

I challenge each member to choose at least one thing that he or she is passionate about and become an advocate. We all must get involved to be successful in overcoming the issues facing our practices and the children we serve. Let's get involved. We as pediatricians have a powerful voice that needs to be heard. We must speak up for ourselves as well as the children. Let's GO!

## Holloway begins term as chapter president

A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, a long-time pediatrician in Montgomery, began his two-year term as president of the Alabama Chapter-AAAP.

In private practice since 1982, Dr. Holloway has been heavily involved in both the local and state pediatric community in a number of ways, including service on the Regional Perinatal Advisory Council, the Sickle Cell Advisory Council, the State Task Force for Preventive Health, the Success by Six Health Committee, the Lead Poisoning Advisory Committee, and as co-medical director of the Child Health Project, among others.

After attaining his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tenn., Dr. Holloway completed his pediatric residency and a neonatal fellowship at Howard University Hospital in Washington, DC.

Dr. Holloway accepted the president's gavel at the Annual Meeting on Sept. 8, symbolically marking the beginning of his term.

"Over the next two years, I will strive to build on the foundations laid by our previous leadership to improve the plight of children in Alabama," Dr. Holloway said. "We cannot rest on our laurels but must face the challenges ahead by getting involved—at the boardroom table, at forums and at the Legislature."

A member of the Executive Board since 2002, he has represented the Chapter on numerous state task forces, including the Alabama Department of Education's Nutrition Task Force and one of Children's Rehabilitation Services' Healthy People 2010 workgroups for children with special needs.

Dr. Holloway is married to the former Glean Hill and has three grown children.



## 2007 Annual Meeting Wrap-Up

*Top-notch clinical speakers, coding workshop and awards highlight conference*

More than 200 total pediatric health care providers and staff attended the 2007 Annual Meeting and Fall Pediatric Update and pre-conference coding workshop at The Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham in September, making it one of the most successful Chapter meetings ever.

"This year, we were delighted to be able to offer the coding workshop on Friday afternoon before the regular conference, which, in some cases, pulled in a different set of pediatricians, as well as the practice managers, who planned the event," said Jennie Breslin, MD, FAAP, outgoing CME Chair. "The session provided an excellent overview of missed coding opportunities and other pearls."



The Chapter Executive Board and other awardees gather at the Saturday awards luncheon.

## Chapter Office and Staff

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## Alabama Chapter – AAP Mission, Values and Vision Statement

### 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 ever stronger.

### Vision:

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

## New Chapter Executive Board takes office

The 2007 chapter elections results were tallied in July, with all nominees voted in as follows: J. Wiley, MD, FAAP, of Dothan, was elected as Vice President/President-Elect (2007-2009); Michelle “Mia” Amaya, MD, FAAP, was re-elected as Secretary/Treasurer (2007-2009); Area Representatives elected were: Jennifer Cole, MD, FAAP, of Mobile and Joseph Jolly, MD, FAAP, of Birmingham. Bill Whitaker, MD, FAAP, of Birmingham was elected to serve a three-year term as Nominating Committee member.

The new Executive Board and Nominating Committee took office on Oct. 1, 2007: President—A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP; Vice President/President-Elect—J. Wiley, MD, FAAP; Secretary/Treasurer—Michelle Amaya, MD, FAAP; Immediate Past President—V.H. Reddy, MD, FAAP; Area 1 Representative—Tim Stewart, MD, FAAP, Huntsville; Area 2 Representative—Grant Allen, MD, FAAP, Florence; Area 3 Representative—Joseph Jolly, MD, FAAP, Birmingham; Area 4 Representative—Lewis Doggett, MD, FAAP, Anniston; Area 5 Representative—Jeff Tamburin, MD, FAAP, Dothan; Area 6 Representative—Jennifer Cole, MD, FAAP, Mobile; Nominating Committee Members—Bob Beshear, MD, FAAP, Chair, Sara Smith, MD, FAAP, and Bill Whitaker, MD, FAAP.

“I have enjoyed working with many of these colleagues over the years, and with this addition of several young pediatricians, I think we have a great blend of experiences and insight going forward,” said A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, incoming president.

## SCHIP reauthorization hanging by a thread

At the time of this writing, the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007 (CHIPRA) (HB 976) has just been vetoed by President George Bush. Currently there are enough positive votes in the US Senate to override the veto, but not enough in the U.S. House of Representatives. In Alabama, the House votes have fallen along party lines, with Republicans opposed to the tobacco tax and other aspects of the bill.

If enacted into law, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that nearly four million children would gain coverage, reducing the number of uninsured children by close to one half.

“We urge Members of Congress to take another look at the compromise bill and see that many of their questions have been addressed and measures have been taken to return this bill to its original intent,” said AAP President Jay Berkelhamer. “This critical safety net program assures that our children get a healthy start so they can grow, learn and reach their potential. The return on this investment is priceless.”

After several months of debate, the Senate and the House passed separate SCHIP bills in July 2007. In an attempt to secure broad bipartisan support, the agreed-upon House-Senate compromise bill, known as CHIPRA, primarily adopted the Senate’s approach. It would offer states an additional \$35 billion in federal funding over the next five years, considerably less than the \$50 billion in the House bill. In addition, the bill does not include many provisions designed to expand coverage that were in the House bill, including an option to allow states to cover low-income children and pregnant women who are legal immigrants and who are currently barred from coverage until they have been in the United States for five years.

CHIPRA would nonetheless result in substantial gains for millions of children. The new funding levels and funding formula would put the program and children’s coverage on more secure financial footing.



Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, then-Chapter Immediate Past President, speaks at a news conference on SCHIP held by Congressman Artur Davis (right) of Alabama’s 7th Congressional District in August.

## NEWS FROM THE AAP

### Residency training program grants available

For the second year, the Community Pediatrics Training Initiative (CPTI) is teaming up with the Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) program to provide a grant opportunity targeting pediatric residency training programs. The grants provide support to residency programs to build sustainable opportunities for residents to gain experience working on community-based child health initiatives that increase access to medical homes or specific health services not otherwise available.

# CATCH

Community Access To Child Health

Grants of up to \$12,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis to pediatric residency programs that submit proposals to plan and implement community-based child health initiatives as part of the training curriculum over the course of 16 months. A pediatric faculty member must oversee the project and provide mentorship for residents participating in project activities.

The 2008 Call for Proposals and Application is now available online at: <http://www.aap.org/commpeps/CPTI/Opportunities.htm>. Proposals are due no later than 4 p.m. central time on November 16, 2007 and should be submitted by e-mail to: [cpti@aap.org](mailto:cpti@aap.org).

For more information, contact [awhybrew@aap.org](mailto:awhybrew@aap.org) or (800) 433-9016, ext. 7397.

### Get your answers to questions with PROS

By D.J. Anagnos, MD, FAAP, PROS Co-Coordinator for Alabama

When do boys start going through puberty? Are there differences based on race? Are there differences based on BMI? Does it correlate to onset of puberty in the parents?

Are you and the parents of your patients interested in these questions? If so, you can be part of the study to answer them!

PROS (Pediatric Research in Office Settings) is a group of interested AAP members nationwide who perform office-based research to answer questions that general pediatricians want answered.

SSCIB (Secondary Sexual Characteristics in Boys) is a study currently underway to answer the above questions, and we are recruiting pediatricians to join in the study.

Other studies currently or soon to be underway are looking at:

- \* Adolescent smoking cessation
- \* Parental smoking cessation counseling
- \* Obesity prevention
- \* Telephone-based parent training
- \* Translating violence prevention evidence into practice
- \* Driving safety

If you are interested in any of the above studies or just want to learn more

about PROS, please check the website, [www.aap.org/pros](http://www.aap.org/pros), or feel free to write to either of your state PROS coordinators: D J Anagnos, MD, FAAP, at [djanagnos@knology.net](mailto:djanagnos@knology.net) or Marc Starer, MD, FAAP, at [marc.starer@chsyst.org](mailto:marc.starer@chsyst.org).

PROS will be meeting next in San Francisco at the AAP NCE on Friday, October 26 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday, October 27 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Marriott. Check for the exact location at the NCE. We would love to have you join us--just stop by and check it out!



### How To Contact Your Chapter Leaders

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## Scenes from the 2007 Annual Meeting



Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP (left), presents the Wallace Clyde award to Bob Beshear, MD, FAAP.



Incoming President A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, presents an award to keynote speaker Congressman Artur Davis for his contributions to children's health care.



Cathy Wood, MD, FAAP, was honored as Children's Master Pediatrician in a presentation by Eric Tyler, MD, FAAP (right).

## "2007 Annual Meeting" continued from page 1

Additionally, the clinical speakers at the Annual Meeting were, as usual, top-notch, covering such topics as developmental screening, vaccines, urology and pediatric emergency medicine.

The Annual Meeting also marked the passing of the gavel to incoming chapter president A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, of Montgomery. Dr. V.H. Reddy was, in turn, honored by Dr. Holloway with a beautiful engraved captain's chair recognizing his two years as Chapter president. Then, outgoing immediate past president Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, was recognized for her many years of dedication to the chapter. Dr. Reddy also presented awards to Madeleine Blancher, MD, FAAP, for her dedication to mental health initiatives, and to the USA Pediatric Residency Program for its renewed commitment to children's advocacy.

The pinnacle of the weekend was the Saturday evening dinner, sponsored by Children's Health System, which featured a keynote address by Congressman Artur Davis of Alabama's 7th Congressional District. The Chapter also presented an award to retiring Children's CEO Jim Dearth, MD, FAAP, who has announced his retirement after more than two-and-a-half decades at Children's.

To top off the evening, Children's presented its "Practical Day" awards, which will become an annual tradition. Eric Tyler, MD, FAAP, made a moving presentation of the Master Pediatrician Award to Cathy Wood, MD, FAAP, a long-time pediatrician in Montgomery. Then, Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP, presented the 2007 Wallace Alexander Clyde, MD Distinguished Service Award for Excellence in Pediatrics to long-time Chapter leader Bob Beshear, MD, FAAP.

"The Saturday banquet and award presentation will always be remembered by us as a special evening," Dr. Beshear said.

Congratulations, Drs. Wood and Beshear!



V.H. Reddy, MD, FAAP, "sits for a spell" in his new captain's chair, engraved with his name and dates of his term as Chapter President.

## Practice Management Association begins new year

The Alabama Chapter-AAP Practice Management Association has kicked off its new year, following a successful coding workshop and annual meeting held in September.

"The annual meeting gave us a networking opportunity to find out what other pediatric offices were doing about pressing issues, such as the new tamper-resistant prescription pad mandate, HIPAA requirements, the Blue Cross class action suit and other hot topics," said Liz Knight, Immediate Past Chair.

Elections were also held for the open Executive Committee positions for the 2007-2008 membership year, which began on October 1, 2007. Congratulations to the new 2007-2008 Executive Committee of the PMA: Robin Riggs, Huntsville Pediatric Associates, Chair; Lynn Brown, Children's Health System, First Vice Chair; Jeff Corbitt, Greenvale Pediatrics, Second Vice Chair; Linda Waldrop, Children's Health System, Third Vice Chair; Liz Knight, Eastern Shore Children's Clinic, Fairhope, Immediate Past Chair; and Mack Howell, Health Services Foundation, Mobile, Secretary/Treasurer.

Membership renewal notices and new applications have been sent to each Chapter member practice.

"We urge pediatric practices to consider signing their practice managers up for membership," said Tim Stewart, MD, FAAP, Chair of the Committee on Practice Management. "The practice managers who joined during this first membership year reaped a lot of benefits."

"The email group listserv, the EMR conference, the coding workshop, and the face-to-face interaction we have had have all been very beneficial to me as a pediatric practice manager," agreed Robin Riggs of Huntsville Pediatric Associates, 2007-2008 Chair of the PMA. "We look forward to doing more great things in the coming year!"

## From the Coordinator

### *Barnes & Noble statewide book fair proves successful*

During two weeks in August, patrons at seven Alabama locations of Barnes & Noble Booksellers purchased and donated 450 new children's books and helped raise more than \$2,000 in the first statewide book fair for Reach Out and Read-Alabama (ROR). In addition to sales and book donations, some stores used local pediatricians to read and promote the program during story time. Books donated by patrons will be distributed to active ROR sites throughout the state this month.



Because of its success, another statewide book-fair is scheduled for November 24 - December 8, 2007—a great time to buy Christmas presents! Please mark your calendars and encourage parents and friends of your patients to take vouchers designated for Reach Out and Read-Alabama and visit their local Barnes & Noble Bookseller during this time. This book fair will include two additional stores in Dothan and Tuscaloosa, which are slated to open this month. Vouchers can be downloaded from the Chapter website at [www.alchapaap.org](http://www.alchapaap.org).

### *Funding continues for ROR sites*

We are thrilled to be able to announce several significant grants that have been awarded to the program, which will provide many books to

children throughout the state in the coming years.

- Twenty pediatric healthcare providers will be able to give books to over 16,000 children and literacy advice to their parents and caregivers in Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston counties, thanks to the generosity of the Wiregrass Foundation in Dothan. This \$125,000 grant will provide books and supplies over five years starting in January 2008 for the two ROR sites in Dothan.

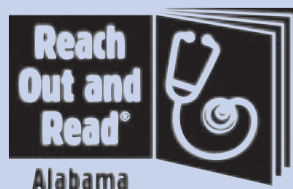
- Through its Division of Special Education, the Alabama State Department of Education awarded \$53,000 to ROR-AL to provide age-appropriate books to 50 rural ROR sites in Alabama and implement an ROR program in practices and clinics that carry large Medicaid caseloads.

- A Library Services & Technology Act grant awarded to the Montgomery City-County Public Library will provide \$9,000 to purchase books for ROR sites at Health Care Services, Inc. locations and Adolescent and Pediatric Associates in Montgomery.

- Congratulations to Blancher & Stadther, MD, PA, of Mobile and Western Health Center, a Jefferson County Department of Health location, for securing a \$2,000 grant each from Target, which will help support books and reading advice to the more than 4,700 total children and their parents and caregivers who participate in these practices' ROR programs. Every Target store provides grants and community volunteers to early childhood reading programs in their local communities.

- Western Health Center's ROR program was also chosen by First Book to receive 7,200 books donated by DK publishing on behalf of Cheerios and Cheerios Spoonfuls of Stories program. Congratulations!

--Polly



**Linda Reeves, MD, FAAP, of Birmingham and Polly McClure, Reach Out and Read-Alabama (ROR) Statewide Coordinator, were both honored as Distinguished Partners by The Literacy Council in Birmingham at a special ceremony in August. Dr. Reeves (pictured receiving her award from Valerie Camp) was honored for her leadership at her Reach Out and Read site at her health center and for her personal contributions of time and money to the program. Polly was recognized for her enthusiasm and determination in growing the Reach Out and Read program from 19 sites to more than 40 since January 2006. Congratulations to both of these individuals for their commitment to ROR!**

## Tamper-Resistant Paper/Pad Vendors

AF&S  
1-800-366-3194  
brianafs@bellsouth.net

Medi-Scripts (free pads)  
1-800-387-3636  
<http://www.medi-scripts-services.com/index.jsp>

American Printing  
205-942-3930

RxPaper  
[www.rxpaper.com](http://www.rxpaper.com)

Secure Guard  
800-333-0549

Histacount  
800-645-5220  
[www.histacount.com](http://www.histacount.com)

FileRx  
800-307-7717  
[www.filerx.com](http://www.filerx.com)

RxSecurity  
800-667-9723  
[www.rxsecurity.com](http://www.rxsecurity.com)

PrintCo  
920-685-5662  
[www.printco.com](http://www.printco.com)

National Rx Security  
[www.nationalrxsecurity.com](http://www.nationalrxsecurity.com)

## Tamper-resistant mandate enacted, then delayed

A mandate requiring that all prescriptions for Medicaid patients be executed on tamper-resistant prescription paper beginning October 1, 2007 was delayed for six months by unanimous legislation passed by Congress and signed into law by President George Bush at the end of September.

The original legislation was enacted by Congress late this summer as a little-noticed provision of a war-funding bill; more specific requirements were issued by the federal government on August 17 and as late as September 12, leaving Medicaid providers little time to obtain the specialty prescription pads needed. The result was an outpouring of opposition from provider organizations across the country, asking Congress for a delay to allow for a smoother transition in complying with the mandate.

"The short time frame allowed to implement this federal mandate imposed an undue administrative burden on Medicaid-enrolled providers," Medicaid Commissioner Carol Steckel said. "While I support prevention of fraud and abuse within the Medicaid program, it is also important that Alabama Medicaid recipients continue to have access to medically necessary prescriptions prescribed legally by their physicians."

In Alabama, the Alabama Chapter-AAP, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama, and other provider and pharmacy associations collaborated at numerous meetings with the Alabama Medicaid Agency to prepare to comply with the new regulations.

Commissioner Steckel expressed appreciation to the state's Medicaid providers for their efforts to work closely with the Agency on this issue.

"The State of Alabama is indebted to these individuals and organizations not only for the care they provide to Alabama's most vulnerable citizens, but also for their willingness to seek workable solutions to meet this requirement," she said.

The new implementation date for the mandate is April 1, 2008. The Chapter urges pediatricians to continue the process of planning and implementing the change to tamper-resistant prescription paper/pads. It is very doubtful that Congress will grant any further delays; consequently, physicians will need to be in full compliance by April 1.

### The mandate

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) clarifies that to be considered tamper-resistant on April 1, 2008, a paper prescription must contain at least one of the following three characteristics:

- one or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent unauthorized copying of a completed or blank prescription form; or
- one or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent the erasure or modification of information written on the prescription by the prescriber; or
- one or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent the use of counterfeit prescription forms.

CMS will issue additional guidance as it becomes available. In the interim, the Alabama Medicaid Agency will continue working with state physician and pharmacy associations regarding Alabama policy changes to ensure compliance for the new implementation date.

## C H A P T E R   B R I E F S

## AAP Special Achievement Awards presented



At the AAP District I & X joint meeting in Burlington, VT in July, the Alabama Chapter-AAP was honored to receive two Special Achievement Awards – one for Chapter Member Jennie Breslin, MD, FAAP, and one for the Chapter itself.

District X Vice Chairperson Linda Anz, MD, FAAP, was on hand at the 2007 Annual Meeting in September to present the two awards. Dr. Breslin (at right)

shown above with Dr. Anz, received the award for her dedication and success as the Chapter CME Chair for the past several years. In the photo at right, Dr. Anz presents Outgoing Chapter President V.H. Reddy, MD, FAAP, with the Chapter award, which was presented for the Chapter's 2006-2007 Peds-to-Schools project.



## In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that the Chapter heard this year of the loss of three long-time pediatricians who contributed significantly to the practice of pediatrics in Alabama:

- Dr. John W. "Bill" Benton, former Chairman of the UAB Department of Pediatrics and Physician-in-Chief of Children's Hospital, passed away this past April. A pioneering child neurologist and teacher, he taught generations of pediatricians and inspired many to enter the field of child neurology. Throughout his career, he was a tireless advocate for the healthcare of the children in Alabama.

- Dr. Robert "Marshall" Pitts, beloved pediatric surgeon at Children's Hospital of Alabama from 1960 to 1995, passed away in May. When Dr. Marshall retired in 1995, it was estimated that he had performed more than 21,000 major operations on premies, babies, children, and teenagers, and more than 100,000 minor operations.

- Dr. A. Charles Money passed away in May following a brief but devastating illness. A beloved husband, father, grandfather and pediatrician, he practiced in Birmingham for more than 40 years. He cared for thousands of children at Pediatrics East and loved each patient as his own.

## Dr. Debra Gardner receives President's award

Chapter Member Debra Gardner, MD, FAAP, of Mobile was honored this summer as a distinguished recipient of the President's Volunteer Service Award. President George Bush personally presented the award to her at a special ceremony on June 21 in Mobile.

Dr. Gardner is a volunteer with a variety of organizations, including Southwest Alabama Medical Preparedness, as president of the Medical Society of Mobile County, and as a mentor for medical students at USA College of Medicine and the USA Christian Medical Society, as well as local elementary, middle, and high school students who have a desire to attend medical school. In addition, Gardner is a volunteer and board member for Camp Rap-A-Hope, a one-week camp for children who are battling cancer. Each summer, she assists with program activities and serves as the camp physician.

To thank them for making a difference in the lives of others, President Bush honors local volunteers when he travels throughout the United States, meeting with more than 575 individuals around the country since March 2002.

Congratulations, Dr. Gardner!



## Expanded Newborn Screening Update

*By S. Lane Rutledge, MD, FAAP, UAB Faculty Member*

Newborn screening (NBS) for cystic fibrosis (CF), a potentially fatal disease, will be implemented later this year in Alabama. A two-tiered screening test will be performed using the same blood collected by heel prick at birth.

Neonates with the disease have an elevated blood immunoreactive trypsinogen (IRT) level. Those neonates with significantly elevated IRT levels will have a multi-mutation DNA analysis for the most common CF mutations. Primary care practitioners will receive information about their screen (+) patients, provide initial explanation of the results to the parents, and encourage them to attend and have their baby evaluated at the newly established CF-NBS clinics in Birmingham (UAB/Children's Hospital) and Mobile (USA) to confirm or rule out the diagnosis.

For more information, call 205-939-9583.

## Event Calendar At a Glance

October 27 – 30  
AAP National Conference  
& Exhibition,  
San Francisco, CA

### 2008

April 17 – 20  
2008 Spring Meeting &  
Pediatric Update,  
Sandestin Beach Hilton,  
Destin, FL

September 26 – 28  
2008 Annual Meeting &  
Fall Pediatric Update,  
Thy Wynfrey Hotel,  
Birmingham

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### **"SCHIP reauthorization" continued from page 2**

Currently, the SCHIP program is in a temporary fix, with a continuing resolution enacted in late September that will keep the program afloat with level funding until November 16—which is not enough to meet the current demands for coverage.

"We will not be able to continue to enroll children at the current rate without additional funding," said Cathy Caldwell, Director of ALL Kids, Alabama's SCHIP program.

Chapter leadership and members have stepped up to the plate over the last several months, making visits to Capitol Hill, speaking at news conferences, writing guest editorials and contacting their Congressmen. The Chapter has worked closely with the AAP Washington office in keeping up with the day-to-day changes on this issue and remains poised to continue the fight.

At the time of this writing, calls are still urgently needed to our House delegation. Because this issue changes on a day-to-day basis, please call the Chapter office if you need updated information at [llee@aap.net](mailto:llee@aap.net) or 334-954-2543 or visit the AAP web site at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

## Developmental screening project takes off

### *Chapter members participate as physician champions and pilot sites*

The Alabama Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) Screening Academy, our state project to improve statewide policy and clinical practice related to standardized developmental screening, is moving ahead in full swing!

The Chapter is partnering with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ALL Kids and Bureau of Family Health Services), the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, the Alabama Medicaid Agency, the Alabama Partnership for Children, and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, among other organizations, to implement this project, which will rely on four pilot sites to begin to integrate valid and standardized developmental screening tools into preventive health care practice.

Madeleine Blancher, MD, FAAP, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health, is the physician champion for the project and serves as one of the pilot sites. She, along with other core team members, traveled to a National Academy for State Health Policy-sponsored learning academy in Houston in July to gain technical assistance from other states on how to measure the process in the pilot sites and then spread standardized screening statewide.

Along with Dr. Blancher's practice, other pilot sites will include Anniston Pediatrics (Drs. Lewis Doggett and Ramarao Vullaganti); UAB Health Center-Huntsville Division of Pediatrics (Drs. Pippa Abston and Steffane Battle), and Jasper Family Practice. In addition, the core team has drawn in more than 40 people statewide, including several Chapter members, to form five workgroups to develop policy and carry out the work of the project.

Using the AAP policy statement on developmental screening (*Pediatrics* 2006; 118; 405-420), the project will subscribe to the policy's algorithm calling for use of a standardized developmental screening tool at the 9-, 18-, 24- and 48-month well-child visits.

After several months, when policies on coding, reimbursement and referral patterns have been addressed and the practice processes measured at each of the pilot sites, the project will be "rolled" out to other practices throughout the state and best practices will be communicated to the pediatric community at large. There will also be an Alabama discount available on screening tools for Chapter members.

If you have any questions, please contact the Chapter office at 334-954-2543.

## NEWS FROM MEDICAID

### Together for Quality Project selects electronic health system vendor

In August, the Alabama Medicaid Agency announced that Richmond, Va.-based ACS Heritage has been selected as the vendor that will partner with the Agency and the Together for Quality stakeholder council to build a statewide electronic health information system in Alabama.

"The contract with ACS Heritage will enable the Alabama Medicaid Agency to move away from a process- and paper-oriented system by creating an electronic health record and new capabilities that make it possible for physicians to securely access patients' lab test results, medical claims, drug and other data to make more informed patient care decisions," Commissioner Steckel said.

She emphasized that the project will ultimately reduce service duplication, create a system for state health and human service agencies to share information electronically and enable the state Medicaid agency to prevent serious problems in patients with chronic illnesses. The Alabama Department of Senior Services has been selected as the first sister agency to test the sharing of information with the new system.

Pediatricians continue to serve on the clinical workgroup for the project, which aims to transform the state's fragmented claims and process-oriented system into one that is coordinated, patient-centered and cost-efficient.

### Medical Director John Searcy ends distinguished state career

Medicaid Medical Director John E. Searcy, MD, FAAP, retired May 31, concluding a distinguished state government career focused on improving health outcomes for low-income children and adults.

As Medicaid's medical consultant, Dr. Searcy played a central role in the development and modification of medical criteria, policies and

procedures used statewide and in the implementation of numerous major projects and programs during his 15-year tenure. Additionally, Dr. Searcy was involved with a variety of clinical and technological projects to improve health outcomes for children and adults, including the development of CME training programs on pediatric asthma, the medical home and health literacy.

This summer, Dr. Searcy returned to his hometown, Dothan, where he has joined his daughter, Angie Blaxton, MD, FAAP, in private practice at Southeastern Pediatrics. Good luck, Dr. Searcy!



**Dr. Robert Moon**  
appointed  
Medicaid  
Medical  
Director

Montgomery family physician Robert Moon, MD, has been appointed Medical Director for the Alabama Medicaid Agency, effective September 1. As Medicaid's medical consultant, Dr. Moon will work with Agency staff on the development and modification of medical criteria, policies and procedures used statewide and in the implementation of clinical projects and programs, including the Agency's Together for Quality initiative.

Board-certified in family medicine, Dr. Moon is a graduate of Auburn University and the University of Alabama School of Medicine. He completed his residency at the Family Medicine Residency Program at The Medical Center in Columbus, Ga. in 1989. He has been in private practice since 1989 and in Montgomery since 1990.

Dr. Moon has a strong professional interest in patient education, disease prevention and physician management, and wants to work with physicians in Alabama to provide the best care possible for Medicaid patients.

### New Perinatal Director Named

Janice M. Smiley, RN, MSN, has been appointed as Perinatal Director in the Alabama Department of Public Health's Bureau of Family Health Services.

Janice has 25 years of diverse nursing experience, including 14 years of experience working in neonatal intensive care, postpartum, newborn nursery and pediatric units. Having worked in state government since 1996, she most recently served as a nurse consultant for the ALL Kids program.

In her new role, she will be responsible for providing leadership for activities that promote perinatal health statewide and to ensure that the regionalized system of care is efficiently and effectively provided to women and infants along the perinatal continuum.

"I have always had a desire to directly impact the quality of care infants receive since I began my nursing career working in a neonatal unit in Selma," Ms. Smiley said. "As the new Perinatal Director, I am committed to improving the overall health of women, infants, and families statewide."

strength \strenth\ n

1: the quality of being strong: ability to do or endure

2: toughness, solidity 3: power to resist attack

4: intensity 5: force as measured by numbers

*we need you to help give them strength!*

The Vaccines for Children Program is a federal entitlement program that provides vaccine at no cost to children under 19 years of age who are on Medicaid, are uninsured, are underinsured, or are American Indian or Alaskan Native.



Alabama Department of Public Health  
1.800.469.4599 | [www.adph.org/immunization](http://www.adph.org/immunization)

## 2007 update on influenza prevention and treatment

By Benjamin Estrada, MD, FAAP, Professor of Pediatrics, Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, University of South Alabama

As we enter the influenza season, practitioners should be aware of recently updated recommendations for the prevention of influenza developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Infectious Diseases and the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. These recommendations are summarized as follows:

- 1) Influenza vaccine should be administered to all healthy children aged six months to five years and to all children with high-risk conditions at any age.
- 2) All children aged six months to eight years who have not been previously vaccinated at any time with either the live attenuated vaccine (LAIV) or trivalent influenza vaccine (TIV) should receive two doses of vaccine.
- 3) Children aged six months to eight years who received only one dose of vaccine during the first year of vaccination should receive two doses the following year with single annual doses subsequently. This recommendation is based on recent studies that demonstrated that influenza vaccine effectiveness is lower among children younger than eight years who have never been immunized or who received only one dose of vaccine during the first season of vaccination.
- 4) Caregivers and household contacts of all healthy children younger than five years of age and all high-risk children should be vaccinated against influenza.
- 5) Influenza vaccine should be administered to all children whose parents wish to reduce the risk on influenza infection, including school-aged children.<sup>1,2</sup>

In addition, influenza vaccination should be offered throughout the influenza season.<sup>1,2</sup> In Alabama, according to information provided by the Alabama Department of Public Health, (ADPH) influenza season 2006-2007 began in late August 2006, widespread activity was reported during the week of November 19 to November 25 and it peaked during late December.<sup>3</sup>

TIV strains recommended for the 2007-2008 are A/Solomon Islands/3/2006(H1N1)-like, A/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2)-like and B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like antigens. At present, TIVs licensed for use in children in the United States include Fluzone® by Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. and Fluvirin® by Novartis Vaccine. Fluzone® is indicated for children who are six months of age and older and Fluvirin® is approved for administration to children who are four years old and older. LAIV (FluMist® by MedImmune, Inc.), is now licensed for administration to individuals who are two to 49 years old.<sup>4,5</sup>

In regards to antiviral prophylaxis and therapy of influenza, the use of amantadine and rimantadine is no longer recommended due to widespread resistance. Instead, the neuroaminidase inhibitors

oseltamivir and zanamivir are indicated for the treatment of influenza among high-risk children and for those with moderate to severe infections. In addition, these agents are indicated for prophylaxis among high-risk children who have not been immunized and for the same group during the two weeks following immunization (Table 1). Prophylactic antiviral therapy should also be administered to close contacts of high-risk children and to unimmunized caregivers and close contacts of infants younger than six months of age.<sup>6</sup>

Table 1. Neuroaminidase inhibitors approved indications <sup>7,8</sup>

	Prophylaxis	Treatment
Oseltamivir	12 months and older	12 months and older
Zanamivir	5 years and older	7 years and older

The AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases and CDC's ACIP have developed and published an algorithm for the administration of influenza vaccine to children which includes the new recommendations listed in this article.<sup>1,2</sup> This algorithm has been adapted as an interactive format by the Alabama Chapter-AAP and can be found on the Chapter's web site at [www.alchapaap.org](http://www.alchapaap.org) under "Immunization Resources." The page also has updated resources on pricing vaccines and other information on reimbursement.

The Chapter has adapted this algorithm to assist pediatricians in decisions related to influenza vaccine administration. If you find this tool to be helpful and would like to use similar tools related to other recommendations in the future, please email the Chapter office at [llee@aap.net](mailto:llee@aap.net).

### References:

- 1) American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Infectious Diseases. Prevention of Influenza: Recommendations for Influenza Immunization of Children, 2006-2007. Pediatrics 2007; 119: 846-851
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- 3) Alabama Department of Public Health. Personal communication
- 4) Food and Drug Administration website: <http://www.fda.gov/cber/flu/flu.htm>. Downloaded 9/4/07
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- 8) Food and Drug Administration web site: [www.fda.gov/cder/news/releaza/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cder/news/releaza/default.htm) Downloaded 9/10/07

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