



# The Alabama Pediatrician

Summer 2008

## From the Chapter President

Oral health assessment is not just for dentists



A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP  
Chapter President

Over the past few years, pediatric oral health assessment has evolved into a partnership between the pediatrician or family physician and the dentist.

The population of dentists is declining. There are only approximately 3,600 pediatric dentists nationally. Most

general dentists don't feel comfortable seeing patients under three years of age.

Today, pediatric dentists recommend that a "normal child" (one who has no developmental disorders or congenital deficiencies) should see a dentist no later than two years of age. Those children who have problems or who are at high risk should visit a dentist no later than six months after their first tooth appears or at about 12 months.

Since we see young infants and children frequently for preventive healthcare visits, pediatricians have a chance to identify children at risk for dental health problems and to coordinate appropriate care. We must remember that the mouth cannot be considered separate from the rest of the body.

Dental caries is the most prevalent chronic illness in children; it is five times more common than asthma. Eighteen percent of children between two and four years of age, 52 percent of six- to eight-year-olds and 67 percent of 12- to 17-year olds have had dental caries. It is a marker of health disparities, as 80 percent of caries occur in 25 percent of school-aged children. It is a disease of poor and minority children, many of whom have limited or no access to dental care. Nationally only one in five

continued on page 3

## 2008 Annual Meeting & Fall Pediatric Update speakers, plans finalized

*Join your practice manager for a pre-conference Vaccine Summit and coding workshop as well!*

Speakers and topics have now been finalized for the Annual Meeting & Fall Pediatric Update, set for September 26 – 28, 2008 at The Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham. Like last year, this year's meeting will include the annual pre-conference Coding Workshop on Friday afternoon. This year, the Chapter is also adding a four-hour Friday morning Vaccine Summit, co-sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health (see below).

Program Chair Cathy Wood, MD, FAAP has lined up an incredible schedule of speakers on topics such as MRSA, foodborne infections, contraception, gynecological problems,



continued on page 3

## Alabama ranks high in children's health care, national study finds

Alabama has been ranked as one of the best states for children's health care, according to a study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, a private foundation that studies health issues and supports efforts to cover more people. Alabama ranked 13th overall and was an exception to trends in other southern states.

The study analyzed 13 measures of children's care including access, quality and costs. Overall, Iowa ranked first and Oklahoma ranked last.

Factors considered included the following:

- Vaccinations – The percentage of children who received five recommended vaccinations from ages 19 months to 35 months.
- Insurance – The percentage of uninsured children
- Preventative visits to the doctor

Commonwealth Fund president Karen Davis was quoted in USA Today as saying, "Certainly with regard to Alabama, it was a matter of leadership. The state was the first one to take advantage of the state child health care program in 1997. It was also very efficient at forging a public-private partnership specifically with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama."

continued on page 2

**Chapter Office and Staff**

Alabama Chapter – AAP

- Linda P. Lee, APR  
Executive Director
- Linda M. Champion  
Project Coordinator
- Jill H. Powell  
Executive Assistant

19 S. Jackson St.  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
(334) 954-2543  
Toll-Free: (866) 293-4783  
Fax: (334) 269-5200  
llee@aap.net  
www.alchapaap.org

**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 ever stronger.

**Vision:**

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

**State Legislative Wrap-Up: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly?**

The 2008 Alabama Legislative Session adjourned its 30-day Regular Session at midnight on May 19, failing to pass the Education Trust Fund budget on time and leaving many child health and well-being bills on the table. One week later, the governor called a special five-day session that ended on Saturday, May 31, finishing the required work of passing budgets for the General and Education Trust funds this year.

For pediatricians, this year's session was a "mixed bag" with some wins and other disappointments. The feuding between parties in the Senate was seen by many as the session's highlight, with inaction on numerous pieces of legislation; not many bills were passed, either that the Chapter supported or opposed. The Smoke-Free bill, SB229, supported by the Chapter and many other organizations, moved forward with more energy than it had ever seen in recent years, only to be held up on the Special Order Calendar on the last day of the session due to filibustering.

Other bills supported by the Chapter, including a strengthened graduated teen driver's license law and an ATV helmet bill, passed committee with amendments, but never moved further.

On the funding side, however, Alabama's children fared better. The education budget included an increase of roughly \$10 million for the Office of School Readiness (OSR), with a total increase for pre-kindergarten initiatives of approximately \$7.3 million. The OSR expects that this amount will fund an additional 103 sites, serving a total of 3,300 children.

Most important on the Chapter's priority list, Alabama Medicaid was fully funded for Fiscal Year 2009, thanks to legislative approval of the General Fund budget, a supplemental appropriation and an allocation from the state's Children First Trust Fund, making it possible for the Agency to maintain existing levels of services for nearly 1 million Alabamians served. In addition, the Alabama Department of Public Health's request for SCHIP funding was fully met. Many thanks go to Governor Bob Riley, House Governmental Appropriation Committee Chair Rep. John Knight, Senate Finance and Taxation (General Fund) Committee Chair Roger Bedford, and other legislators for their commitment to keeping children in Alabama insured by these important public payors.

And finally, many thanks go to our Chapter members themselves who talked to their legislators during the session and helped us push our issues.

"I appreciate all the members who made an extra effort to follow these issues and make their voices heard," said A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, Chapter President.

**"Children's Health Care" continued from page 1**

The report uses data from government agencies as well as private groups, such as the Kaiser Family Foundation, a non-partisan research group. Nationally, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (ALL Kids in Alabama) has reduced the percentage of uninsured low-income children by 25 percent from 1996 to 2006. Medicaid and ALL Kids have made a significant impact on the health of Alabama's children; together they provide cover to almost 500,000 children.

The report concluded that there is a high correlation between access to care and the quality of care a child receives.

Alabama is tied with Connecticut and Nebraska at 13th. Other states that ranked high include Vermont, 2nd; Maine, 3rd; and Massachusetts, 4th. Tennessee ranked 30th, Georgia ranked 38th, Mississippi ranked 49th and Florida ranked 50th in the children's care study.

"I think the pediatricians in Alabama can be quite proud of their contributions to this achievement," said A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, Chapter President. "The hard work of the small group of pediatricians who led the way to help make ALL Kids a reality in Alabama is certainly to be commended. But where the rubber meets the road is the consistent, quality care that pediatricians across the state render to our state's children, day in and day out.

"Alabama can be quite proud," he added. "Of course, now we need to not rest on our laurels but continue to be proactive in improving access for all children in Alabama."

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**"President's Column" continued from page 1**

children on Medicaid ever receives a preventive dental visit, and increased levels of oral disease are being seen in this population of children.

We now know that dental caries is an infectious disease. The primary marker organism for caries infection is *Streptococcus mutans*.

The Alabama Chapter-AAP is happy to begin training Alabama primary care physicians to perform oral health risk assessments to identify early decalcification and to apply dental varnish. The first training will take place at the Annual Meeting in Birmingham. Don't be afraid, colleagues; these skills are easy to learn.

As part of this initiative, the Chapter is working with the Alabama Medicaid Agency (ALMA) on a proposal that is being reviewed by ALMA, as well as ALL Kids, to reimburse primary care physicians for oral health screening and varnish application. I would like to thank Ric Simpson, DMD, Chapter Oral Health Representative, the Alabama Dental Association and the Alabama Academy of Pediatric Dentistry for taking the lead with our Chapter to bring this project to fruition.

See you in Birmingham!

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**"Annual Meeting" continued from page 1**

a 2008 influenza update, easy-to-miss pediatric genetic diseases, oral health risk assessment training, internet technology applications for pediatrics, EMRs in pediatrics, and developmental pediatrics, among others. (A complete list of Annual Meeting speakers and topics can be found at the right.)

**2008 Coding Workshop**

For the second year in a row, this year's Annual Meeting will feature the Practice Management Association-sponsored half-day pre-conference coding workshop, "Pediatric Power Coding: The Basics and Beyond," on Friday, September 26 from 1 p.m. - 5 p.m. Back by popular demand, Richard Tuck, MD, FAAP, a member of the AAP Committee on Coding and Nomenclature and Section on Administration & Practice Management, will provide his insight and offer pearls on missed coding opportunities. He will be joined by Lynn Brown, coding specialist with Children's Hospital of Alabama and Vice Chair of the PMA, who will present a "Pediatric Coding Update: A Refresher on What Works in Alabama." The workshop will be open to both practice managers and physicians.

**Vaccine Summit**

The Alabama Chapter-AAP, the PMA and the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) will jointly sponsor a four-hour Vaccine Summit to update members on the latest immunization information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and ADPH. Set for Friday, September 26 from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, the four-hour session will offer provide education on vaccine-preventable diseases; a look at how pediatricians can navigate the CDC web site; information on National Immunization Survey data, the value of the state immunization registry, and Vaccines for Children; and a pediatrician-led sharing session on missed vaccine-related opportunities. This session is also geared to both pediatricians and their practice managers and staff.

As usual, there will be plenty of time for networking with your fellow colleagues from around the state—including a Friday night reception in the exhibits, and a Saturday evening reception for residents that will precede the Annual Awards dinner, sponsored by Children's Hospital.

The registration brochure and form with all of the details will be mailed at the beginning of July.

A block of rooms has been held at The Wynfrey at a special group rate of \$143. To reserve, go online to [www.wynfrey.com](http://www.wynfrey.com) and be sure to enter group code 1AT7GO. Or call 1-800-WYNFREY or 205-987-1600 and reference the group code. Make your reservation now! This rate will be available for reservations made by September 9, 2008.

For more information, contact the Chapter office at 334-954-2543 or [llee@aap.net](mailto:llee@aap.net).

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**2008 Annual Meeting  
& Pediatric Update****Speakers and Topics****James Dupree, Jr.,**

Consultant, The Bloom Group,  
Montgomery, AL

- ♦ Advocacy in 2008: Effecting Change for Alabama's Children

**Margaret C. Fisher, MD,**

**FAAP**, Chair, Department of  
Pediatrics, Medical Director, The  
Children's Hospital at Monmouth  
Medical Center, Long Branch, NJ

- ♦ Shirts or Skins: New Challenges from MRSA
- ♦ Foodborne Infections: Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

**Gerri D. Hewitt, MD,**

Associate Professor of Pediatrics  
and Obstetrics/Gynecology, The  
Ohio State University College of  
Medicine, Columbus, OH

- ♦ Clinical Problems in Gynecology
- ♦ Update on Contraception

**A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP,**

President, Alabama Chapter-AAP  
♦ Alabama Chapter-AAP Update

**Nathaniel H. Robin, MD,**

Professor of Genetics and  
Pediatrics, UAB

- ♦ Easy-to-Miss Pediatric Genetic Diseases

**Jeanne M. Santoli, MD,**

**MPH, FAAP**, Deputy Director,  
Immunization Services Division,  
National Center for Immunization  
and Respiratory Diseases,  
Centers for Disease Control and  
Prevention, Atlanta, GA

- ♦ Seasonal Influenza Update

**S. Andrew Spooner, MD,**

**MS, FAAP**, Chief Medical  
Information Officer, Cincinnati  
Children's Hospital Medical  
Center, Cincinnati, OH

- ♦ The Whys and "Why-nots" of Electronic Medical Records in Pediatrics
- ♦ Web 2.0: New Internet Technologies for Pediatrics

**continued on page 4**



## 2008 Annual Meeting continued from page 3

**Huw F. Thomas, BDS, MS, PhD,** Dean, UAB School of Dentistry  
♦ Oral Health Risk Assessment Training

**R. Franklin Trimm, MD, FAAP,** Professor of Pediatrics, USA School of Medicine  
♦ Follow-up Care of the NICU Graduate

**Don Williamson, MD,** State Health Officer  
♦ 2008 Public Health Update

### Vaccine Summit

**Jeanne M. Santoli, MD, MPH, FAAP**  
♦ Vaccines and Vaccine-Preventable Disease Update

**Charles H. Woernle, MD, MPH,** Assistant State Health Officer for Disease Control and Prevention, Alabama Department of Public Health  
♦ Immunization Perspectives from the Alabama Department of Public Health

**Sherri L. Davidson, MPH,** Registry Branch Director, Immunization Division, Alabama Department of Public Health  
♦ Increasing Vaccination Rates through Immunization Registry

### Coding Workshop

**Richard H. Tuck, MD, FAAP,** Medical Director, Quality Care Partners and AAP District V Vice Chairperson  
♦ Pediatric Power Coding 2008

**Lynn A. Brown, CPC,** Director, Physician Coding and Reimbursement, Children's Health System  
♦ Pediatric Coding Update: A Refresher on What Works in Alabama

## Camaraderie, top-notch education highlight Spring Meeting

More than 110 pediatricians and other pediatric healthcare providers attended the Chapter's 2008 Spring Meeting & Pediatric Update, held at the Hilton Sandestin Beach in April.

Attendees enjoyed a strong sense of camaraderie at networking events, such as the opening reception, Young Pediatricians Gathering on Saturday night, as well as a "Best Practices Sharing Breakfast" on Saturday morning.

Nationally known speakers provided excellent presentations on juvenile arthritis, headache management, seizures, sleep disorders and handling mental health issues in pediatric practice, in addition to top-notch Alabama speakers, who covered nephrology, newborn screening and developmental screening. Following a national update by AAP President Renee Jenkins, MD, FAAP, Chapter President A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, provided an inspirational talk on the importance of advocacy.

"This was one of the best educational conferences that I've been to," wrote an attendee on his evaluation.

Make plans now to attend next year's Spring Meeting, set for April 2-5, 2009 at the Baytowne Conference Center at Sandestin!



AAP President Renee Jenkins, MD, FAAP, addresses members at the Friday luncheon.



Maria Sugang, MD, FAAP, (center) and her family are all smiles at the Saturday dinner.



Chapter President A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, honors Mia Amaya, MD, FAAP, two-term Secretary/Treasurer, for her many years of devoted service to the Chapter. Dr. Amaya is moving to South Carolina at the end of the month.



David Chupp, MD, FAAP, and family enjoy the Saturday evening reception.



Mia Amaya, MD, FAAP, A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, Renee Jenkins, MD, FAAP, and Katie Kleiner, MD, a resident at UAB, pause for a moment at the Friday luncheon.

## Summer roundtables to “negotiate” local mental health systems

Building on the success of the Chapter’s Healthy People 2010 grant project in 2005-2006 that provided education and roundtable networking discussions on children’s mental health issues in four areas of the state, the Chapter has secured a second mental health grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics that will allow for four additional roundtable networking sessions this summer.

Planned by the Chapter’s Mental Health Coalition, this new project will host regional roundtable dinner sessions/community service provider forums this summer for local pediatricians in the Shoals, East Alabama, Selma and Dothan areas so that local mental health networks will be established and community referral resources are identified for pediatricians to access in those areas. Coordinated by lead pediatricians and local community mental health centers, the meetings will bring together pediatricians, mental health center professionals, psy-

chiatrists, early intervention professionals, and others serving the mental health needs of children.

The objectives at each session will be to inventory local mental health resources and services available for children, address gaps in the local system of care, and develop a compendium of mental health resources for pediatricians, which will later be catalogued on the Chapter web site’s mental health pages.

Many thanks to the following pediatricians who are working with the committee at the local level: Grant Allen, MD, FAAP; Florence; Linda Anz, MD, FAAP; Sara SmithT, MD, FAAP; and Lisa Young, MD, FAAP, East Alabama; Lotfi Bashir, MD, FAAP, Selma; and Craig Adams, MD, FAAP, and Michelle Freeman, MD, FAAP, Dothan.

For more information, contact Linda Champion, Project Coordinator, at 334-324-9307 or the Chapter office at 334-954-2543.

### Mental Health roundtable dates are as follows:

- June 23, 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Cypress Lakes Golf and Country Club, Muscle Shoals
- July 15, 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Auburn Hotel & Conference Center
- July 17, 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., St. James Hotel, Selma
- July 28, 6 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Location TBD (tentative)

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## How To Contact Your Chapter Leaders

### President

Albert Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP  
2611 Woodley Park Dr.  
Montgomery, AL 36116  
Ph. (334) 288-0009  
Fax: (334) 288-1441  
aholloway687@charter.net

### Vice-President/President-Elect

James C. Wiley, MD, FAAP  
126 Clinic Dr.  
Dothan, AL 36330  
Ph. (334) 793-1881  
Fax: (334) 712-1815  
docjwiley@comcast.net

### Secretary-Treasurer

Michelle I. Amaya, MD, FAAP  
UAB Division of General Pediatrics  
1600 Seventh Ave. South MTC 201  
Birmingham, AL 35233-1711  
Ph. (205) 934-4531  
Fax (205) 975-6503  
mamaya@peds.uab.edu

### Immediate Past President

V.H. Reddy, MD, FAAP  
503 Burlington St.  
Scottsboro, AL 35768  
Ph. (256) 259-1886  
Fax (256) 259-6838  
reddyvh@hiwaay.net

### Area Representatives to the Board

Grant Allen, MD, FAAP  
Florence  
allen\_grant@hotmail.com  
Ph. (256) 764-9522

### Jennifer Cole, MD, FAAP

Mobile  
jcole@usouthal.edu  
Ph. (251) 442-5001

### Lewis Doggett, MD, FAAP

Anniston  
lewis.doggett@annistonpediatrics.com  
Ph. (256) 237-1618

### Joseph Jolly, MD, FAAP

Birmingham  
jollydoc@aol.com  
Ph. (205) 663-9550

### Tim Stewart, MD, FAAP

Huntsville  
tstewart@hhsys.org  
Ph. (256) 265-2464

### Jeff Tamburin, MD, FAAP

Dothan  
jtamburin@comcast.net  
Ph. (334) 793-1881

## From the Coordinator

According to the latest 2007 Kids Count Data Book\*, 26 percent of Alabama's children under the age of five live in poverty (compared to 21 percent in the U.S.). Studies show that children in poverty are less likely to have printed material in their home and be exposed to books. Our vision continues to be that all of Alabama's children will be better prepared to learn when they start school because pediatric health care providers incorporated pre-literacy counseling with families into their well-child visits and provided new books at each of those visits.

### *Advisory Council participates in strategic planning process*

Thirteen members of the Reach Out and Read-Alabama (ROR-AL) Advisory Council met on June 5 to begin strategic planning to sustain ROR-AL for the next three to five years. Kara Kennedy of Kennedy Resource Development is facilitating this process, thanks to a technical assistance grant from the Central Alabama Community Foundation. Stay tuned for the final outcomes of our strategic plan.

### *Number of ROR sites in state reaches 54*

Congratulations to the Mobile County Health Department for applying for and gaining approval for all five clinics in the Health Department system, which serves over 5,500 children, to become ROR sites.

In addition, the first pediatric practice in Selma (Pediatric Adolescent Medicine) gained approval of its ROR site. Marina Thompson, MD, FAAP, in Brewton, as well as Eufaula Pediatric Clinic, also received approval.

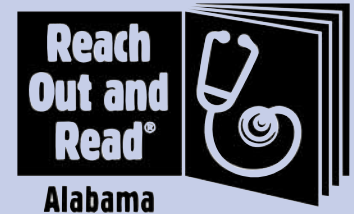
With the approval of these eight sites, over 77,500 children are receiving new books at each well-child visit, plus their parents/caregivers are receiving advice about the importance of reading. These practices received a total of \$23,000 in start-up grants for the purchase of their ROR books.

### *Sustainability grants awarded to 21 ROR sites*

Twenty-one ROR sites received more than \$12,800 during the last round of grant awards for sustainability. Sites must be approved for at

least a year and have completed their bi-annual progress report before awards can be

granted. For assistance in completing progress reports, please contact Polly McClure, RPh, at roralabama@charter.net or 205-223-0097.



### *Targeted growth for FY 09*

Due to funding cuts by the federal government to ROR National, new ROR sites will only be approved next year if local funding is available for book purchases. Sustainability grants will still be awarded twice each year based on the completion of progress reports. ROR-AL continues to work to raise local funds to maintain current programs and help fund new programs. Salina Frazee of Montgomery has joined ROR-AL on a part-time basis to help develop private donors as well as a quarterly newsletter for the program. Salina comes to us with many years of experience in public relations and fundraising. She can be reached at salinafrazee@charter.net.

### *Shop online and support ROR-AL*

More than 700 name-brand stores are now participating in GoodShop.com and will donate to up to 30 percent of each purchase to ROR-AL when selected as the charity. The next time you shop online for a new pair of shoes, book, computer, birthday present, flowers, plane ticket or just about anything else, go to GoodShop.com and then follow the instructions to have a percentage of your purchases donated to ROR-Alabama. Yes, it's that easy! Just one click could help us raise monies to support our ROR program here in Alabama.

PS. And don't forget to use GoodSearch.com the next time you search the Internet. This Yahoo-powered search engine donates about a penny per search to your favorite cause!

— Polly

\*For the latest information on children living in Alabama go to [www.kidscount.org/datacenter](http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter).

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)



## C H A P T E R B R I E F S

## Johnston honored with Burleson Award

Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP, professor emeritus of pediatrics at the University of Alabama School of Medicine, past president of both the Alabama Chapter-AAP (1980-1983) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) (2003-2004), and a long-time advocate for children in Alabama, has been awarded the 2008 Paul W. Burleson Award by the Medical Association of the State of Alabama.

Named in honor of Paul

W. Burleson, MD, an Alabama physician and renowned benefactor, the Burleson award is presented in recognition of a medical career that encompasses not only high ethical and professional standards in patient care, but includes extraordinary service to physician organizations at the county, state and national levels. The award has been given annually by the Medical Association since 2000. Dr. Johnston was presented with the award at the MASA Annual Session Awards Dinner on May 23.

A long-time pediatrician in Alabama, Dr. Johnston established the Pediatric Emergency Medicine Department at Children's Hospital of Alabama, where he practiced and nurtured its growth from two physicians to 24-hour coverage.

He has not only educated medical students and residents, but parents as well, especially through his 10 years of contributions to "KidCheck" on NBC-13, for which he received MASA's Howard L. Holley Award in 1998. Among many other accomplishments, Dr. Johnston wrote, lobbied, testified, advised and negotiated the state's first Child Passenger Safety Law.

His list of AAP- and Chapter-related accomplishments and awards is long. He continues to work at the national and international levels with the AAP and with the Chapter on its Injury Prevention Committee, advocating for better child health safety policies in Alabama.

Kudos, Dr. Johnston!



Carden Johnston, MD, FAAP, accepts the Burleson Award from Jorge Alsip, MD, chairman of the MASA Board of Censors.

## Stewart elected to MASA board

Tim Stewart, MD, FAAP, a pediatrician with Huntsville Pediatrics and Area 1 Representative on the Alabama Chapter-AAP Executive Board, has been elected as Censor-At Large, Place 2 on the Board of Censors of the Medical Association of the State of Alabama (MASA). Dr. Stewart was nominated on the day of the election, held at the MASA Annual Session in May, and carried the votes to win the election. He joins Richard Freeman, MD, FAAP, in representing pediatrics on the MASA board.

Congratulations, Dr. Stewart!



Tim Stewart, MD

## Resident Rounds: Advocacy

By Jessica Kirk, third-year resident, University of South Alabama  
AAP Resident Section, ADC District X

As another year of residents prepare to advance into the world, it seems fitting to take a look back at the activities of Alabama's pediatric residents over the past year. Both UAB and USA are increasingly culturing an environment that motivates residents to become budding advocates for children, and residents themselves are becoming the driving force for many projects in our communities. As you may recall from a previous Chapter newsletter, Dr. Jennifer Cole and I had the opportunity to attend the AAP's Legislative Day in Washington DC (thanks to an amazing CPTI advocacy training grant), and I was very excited to develop an advocacy program here at USA. I am proud to report that our grant project has been a success! We have hosted our two planned advocacy grand rounds, as well as consistently hosting regular advocacy update conferences to keep our residents up-to-date on child advocacy issues in our state. A huge thank you goes to our state Chapter, as we would not have achieved this goal without its help and guidance.

In other resident advocacy news, I would like to applaud UAB's resident volunteer organization, Coat of Arms, for organizing a community 5K run to benefit Children's Hospital. In addition, congratulations to Joshua Mizell, a second-year medicine-pediatrics resident at USA, for his CATCH grant to promote car safety and proper use of booster seats. As highlighted in the last Chapter newsletter, Sarah Joiner from USA, Crystal Palmatier from UAB, and I attended the Chapter's state legislative day. We all had an amazing time while being educated on the Chapter's legislative priorities, and hope to return next year with even more residents. Keep up the good work, everyone!

## Expanded Newborn Screening Update

By Hector Gutierrez, MD, UAB Faculty Member

Cystic fibrosis (CF) newborn screening is up and running! The program has already identified the first CF case after only three weeks. This case clearly underscores the benefits of newborn screening. The baby was confirmed as having CF at three weeks of



**"Chapter Briefs" continued from page 8**

age. The patient was completely asymptomatic and appropriate care was started immediately. Furthermore, the family received genetic counseling during their visit to the Newborn Screening clinic. We anticipate around 20 or so new cases each year.

In addition, the Alabama Department of Public Health has made available to the community a comprehensive website with useful information about the Alabama Newborn Screening Program, including educational brochures on newborn screening of cystic fibrosis. Visit the new site at [www.adph.org/newbornscreening](http://www.adph.org/newbornscreening).

Chapter solicits members to join Practice Management e-mailing list, makes plans for coding education

At its strategic planning session in January, the Chapter Executive Board placed special priority on improving access to pediatric coding education and information for Chapter members.

As part of a multi-prong effort, the Chapter office and the Practice Management Association

(PMA) invites Chapter members to opt in to the PMA electronic mailing list (previously only practice managers who were members of the PMA had access to this list). The purpose of the e-mailing list is for its members to share information and best practices with one another on practice management topics, such as coding, billing, recruitment, employee issues, etc. By typing in one email address, you can query your colleagues on these issues. Clinical topics should not be discussed.

To opt in to this email group mailing list, go to <http://www.alchapaap.org/iform.asp?id=246> and enter your name and email address and you will be emailed instructions from Lynn Brown in the next few weeks to confirm your address and get set up as a mailing list member.

Other aspects of the board's coding education/information strategy includes: the annual coding workshop, set for September 26 (see related article on page 3), and other initiatives, which are still under development: group emails on coding pearls; "Coding Corner" podcasts and/or web information; webinars; and sharing sessions. More information coming soon!



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## NEWS FROM MEDICAID

State leaders lobby Congress in effort to delay seven regulatory cuts

Physicians, consumer advocates and state health and human service officials throughout Alabama continue to vigorously lobby Congress to impose a moratorium on seven regulations that would potentially cost the state of Alabama at least \$578 million in the next year, or as much as \$2.9 billion over the next five years.

The moratorium legislation is included in the supplemental war spending bill which now awaits action in Congress. In addition to jeopardizing Medicaid funds, the proposed regulations impose deep cuts to services funded by the departments of Public Health, Human Resources, Youth Services, Rehabilitation Services and Mental Health and Mental Retardation, plus local school systems in Alabama. Visit the Medicaid web site at [www.medicaid.alabama.gov](http://www.medicaid.alabama.gov) for details on these cuts.

In April, Past President Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, represented the AAP in Washington when she spoke before the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee on the ramifications of these cuts to children.

"It is critical for the health of those dependent on Alabama Medicaid that the moratorium be extended," said Medicaid Commissioner Carol H. Steckel. "We are urging everyone to contact members of the Alabama Congressional delegation to emphasize the urgent need to support this moratorium."

**Together for Quality grant project pilots chronic care management, e-clinical support tool**

Through Alabama Medicaid's Together for Quality transformation grant, the Agency hopes to build on the Patient 1st care management program to provide quality, cost-effective, patient-centered care.

Two components of the project involve direct participation by primary care physicians: a chronic care management program and the implementation of an electronic clinical support

tool. These components are currently being piloted in 11 counties, as providers are continuing to be contacted and patients are being enrolled.

The TFQ Clinical Workgroup, made up of physicians as well as Medicaid staff and other stakeholders, targeted six chronic health issues of concern to implement an intensive care management program. With an initial focus on diabetes and asthma, the workgroup has identified missed opportunities based on national measures that will be woven into this care management program:

*Diabetes:*

- Annual influenza immunization
- Annual hemoglobin A1c
- Annual lipid profile
- Annual eye exam
- Annual urine protein screening

*Asthma:*

- Asthma controller use
- Annual influenza immunization
- Emergency department visits
- Hospitalizations

The other component, the electronic clinical support tool, will create a web-based electronic health record that will be overlaid with rules to create clinical alerts as well as give providers much-needed information on Medicaid recipients' health care history, including lab values and vaccination information from the state's immunization registry, IMMPrint. The tool has the ability to allow a physician's office to use it as an electronic medical record as well as input data from their notes in addition to the claims information available.

Currently, Medicaid is looking for pilot providers in the following counties: Jefferson, Houston and Winston. If you are interested in serving as a pilot practice, contact Kim Davis-Allen at (334) 242-5011 or [Kim.Davis-Allen@medicaid.alabama.gov](mailto:Kim.Davis-Allen@medicaid.alabama.gov) and she will put you in touch with a provider liaison.

### On the Web

Practice Management Online (PMO) is a valuable online AAP resource to support pediatricians in running a practice that is fiscally sound, efficient, and provides quality health care to children and families. Each month, a variety of tools, resources, and articles are added to the site. The following are just a few recent additions to PMO.

- Are you thinking about hiring a new physician, nurse practitioner, or other staff member? Or are you looking for a new position and need assistance preparing for the interview? If so, you need to learn about a new trend in interviewing. The following articles will provide you with just that: "Hiring for a Position: Tips on Interviewing" and "Job Seeker: Tips on Interviewing."
- Retail-based clinics are here today and seeing pediatric patients. They may have an effect on your practice and you need to decide how you are going to respond. Visit PMO to learn "What Can You Do to Compete With Retail-Based Clinics."
- Do you have an office financial policy that defines how charges are collected, how co-payments are collected, and the process for billing patients? Visit PMO for a sample office financial policy that can be used and/or adapted to meet the needs of your practice.

Visit PMO at <http://practice.aap.org/> for these and many more articles, tools and resources. Sign up to receive alerts about new content at <http://practice.aap.org/emailAlert.aspx>.

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## **Event Calendar At a Glance**

### **2008**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| June 23       | Negotiating the Shoal's Mental Health System for Children, Cypress Lakes Golf & Country Club, Muscle Shoals, AL |
| July 15       | Negotiating East Alabama's Mental Health System for Children, Auburn Hotel & Conference Center, Auburn, AL      |
| July 17       | Negotiating Selma's Mental Health System for Children, St. James Hotel, Selma, AL                               |
| July 28       | Negotiating Dothan's Mental Health System for Children, Location: TBD   |
| Sept. 26      | Vaccine Summit, The Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, AL   |
| Sept. 26      | 2nd Annual PMA Coding Workshop, The Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, AL   |
| Sept. 26 - 28 | 2008 Annual Meeting & Fall Pediatric Update, The Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, AL                                  |
| Oct. 11 - 14  | AAP National Conference & Exhibition, Boston, MA  |

### **2009**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| April 2 - 5 | 2009 Spring Meeting & Pediatric Update, Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort, Destin, FL |
|-------------|---|

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## Chapter lands Healthy People 2010 School Health Grant

As part of the American Academy of Pediatrics' *Healthy People 2010* grant program, the AAP District Vice Chairpersons have selected the Alabama Chapter-AAP as one of five Chapters to receive \$20,000 in funding to develop and implement programs that focus on building collaboration between chapters and schools to support the development of programs that address children's health issues.

Developed by School Health Committee Co-Chairs Daniel Preud'homme, MD, FAAP, and Linda Reeves, MD, FAAP, along with Project Coordinator Linda Champion and Executive Director Linda Lee, the Chapter's project, "Building Bridges Between Pediatricians and School Nurses," was one of 14 proposals submitted to the AAP for consideration.

Through "Building Bridges," the Chapter will develop a framework for Alabama pediatricians to effectively link to local school nurses and other school stakeholders to address the social, emotional and health needs of school-aged children and adolescents in their communities.

"Because resources and educational levels vary tremendously by school in Alabama, and recognizing that school nurses play a critical role in administering school health services, this project will assess the school health environment at the local level and work toward creating sustainable partnerships among school nurses, administrators,

other school personnel and Chapter members," Dr. Preud'homme said.

"We don't want to approach the schools with programs that we think would work; we want to find out from *them* how pediatricians can most effectively serve as resources, whether it is a rural school with no money or a wealthier suburban school system," agreed Dr. Reeves.

For these reasons, the goals of this project are:

- To conduct a statewide survey among school nurses of community-specific health needs and resources that can be provided by pediatricians at the local level;
- To conduct focus groups in three pilot locations to gather feedback from key school stakeholders and develop a strategy for local collaboration that could be replicated in other areas;
- To use these results to identify educational programs and communication methods favored by nurses and school stakeholders that can be delivered by pediatricians in the three pilot communities.

Work will begin this summer as the project committee pulls together a multi-disciplinary stakeholder group to help design the survey and create buy-in among the education community.

## NEWS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH

### Protect Alabama!

Because of your leadership in immunizing children, vaccine-preventable disease levels are at or near record lows. In order to target under-immunized adolescents who miss opportunities to protect themselves against diseases such as Hepatitis B, human papillomavirus, influenza, meningitis, and pertussis, you can help vaccinate Alabamians to become the first state to reach 90 percent or higher vaccination coverage for adolescents aged 13 to 15 years.

As children move into adolescence, they are at a great risk of catching certain vaccine-preventable diseases. Since immunity from some childhood vaccines can decrease over time, adolescents need to get another dose of certain vaccines during their pre-teen years. As stated in the August 31, 2007 weekly *MMWR*, "In 2006, for the first time, the National Immunization Survey (NIS) collected provider-reported vaccination information for adolescents aged 13 to 17 years (NIS-Teen)...Overall

coverage for Td or Tdap was 60.1 percent, MCV4 was 11.7 percent, and HPV coverage is not included because the survey was performed prior to HPV vaccine recommendations." Thus, vaccinating adolescents presents various challenges, including the lack of healthcare coverage, visiting multiple health care providers, and failure to seek preventive health care services.

In order to increase adolescent immunization coverage levels to be competitive with the childhood immunization rates, adolescents aged 18 and younger may be eligible to get vaccines for free through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program if they are: Medicaid-eligible, underinsured, without insurance, or American Indian or Alaskan Native. Vaccines are furnished at

no cost to providers, and administration fees are billable through Medicaid. The VFC staff is available to provide continuing education units for nursing staff regarding

storage and handling and administration techniques. Additionally, the VFC staff provides on-site quality assurance feedback, up-to-date vaccine information, and is readily available to provide resources, support and tools for office personnel. To discover the latest information regarding vaccines and

immunization practices, please look for our upcoming series on VPD.

To learn more about the VFC program, visit our website at [www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org) or contact the ADPH Immunization Division at 1-866-674-4807.



## NEWS FROM THE AAP

### AAP calls for CATCH proposals

For the 15th consecutive year, the American Academy of Pediatrics is offering pediatricians an opportunity to put their ideas into action by taking advantage of the funding available through the Community Access To Child Health (CATCH) Program. A pediatrician or pediatric resident must lead the project and be involved in the proposal development and project activities.

#### *CATCH Planning Funds*

Grants are provided in amounts from \$2,500 to \$12,000 for pediatricians to plan innovative, community-based

projects to increase children's access to health care and address health disparities among children.

#### *CATCH Resident Funds*

Grants of up to \$3,000 are available for pediatric residents to work with local communities to ensure that all children, especially underserved children, have medical homes and access to any needed health care services.

For more information on these grants, visit the Planning Funds or Resident Funds section of the CATCH web site at [www.aap.org/catch/](http://www.aap.org/catch/).

Applications are due July 31. For assistance in Alabama, contact our CATCH coordinator, Jennifer Cole, MD, FAAP, at [jjcole@usouthal.edu](mailto:jjcole@usouthal.edu) or (251) 648-2660.

Join more than 950 pediatricians who, through their CATCH projects, have learned that local child health problems can be solved locally, often using local resources. *One pediatrician can make a difference!*

### AAP elections open soon

From Aug. 29 to Oct. 1, 2008, members can let their voices be heard as they cast ballots in the 2008 AAP National Election.

The AAP National Nominating Committee has named Colleen Kraft, MD, FAAP, and Judith Palfrey, MD, FAAP, as candidates for

AAP President-Elect. The Chapter strongly encourages you to visit the "2008 National Election" page on the AAP Member Center ([www.aap.org/moc](http://www.aap.org/moc)) to view these two candidates' bios, position statements, and answers to common questions related to their vision for the AAP.

In addition, members of District X (of which Alabama is part) will vote for district leadership positions, including District Chair, District Vice Chairperson, and National Nominating Committee member.

The Chapter is honored to have our own Linda Anz, MD, FAAP, a community pediatrician in Opelika and long-time Chapter leader, in the running as incumbent for the District Vice Chairperson position.

All vote-eligible members will be notified by e-mail when the on-line ballot is available and also will be mailed a paper ballot, for those who prefer that option.

"We strongly encourage all Chapter members to get out and vote when the elections open at the end of August," said A.Z. Holloway, MD, FAAP, Chapter President. "Alabama needs to be heard!"

### Supporting military children during wartime

*By CPT Bonnie Geneman, MD, Resident Pediatrician, and MAJ Keith M. Lemmon, MD, FAAP, Vice President, AAP Uniformed Services West Chapter*

In today's era of multiple military deployments, there is an entire generation of military children affected by the absence of one or both parents. Recognizing that deployment has a variety of impacts on families, the military is making an effort to reach out to children and provide them with the tools to cope with this unique military family stressor.

Many parents notice behavioral changes in their children before, during or after parental deployments. This is not unusual and is most appropriately addressed through

meaningful discussion. Parents may hesitate to talk about their children's behavioral changes or other family challenges, feeling that they need to maintain a strong front in support of the deployed family member. In actuality, discussing the emotions, stressors and changes in the family dynamic can be helpful for all family members.

Younger children often do not understand the concept of deployment or long absences. They may, however, notice that a beloved parent is not there to tuck them in at night or read them a story. Developmental regression (i.e. bedwetting, return of separation anxiety, baby talk) is a common phenomenon seen with young children who experience a big change or life stressor.

With increased age comes increased understanding and with increased understanding may come fear. Fearing that a parent may forget about a child, become injured or fail to return from deployment is all too common. Additionally, many older children face increased responsibilities at home, which helps fill the void left behind by the deployed parent. Some adolescents feel bitter, angry, or depressed, others are consumed by fear, and yet others channel their emotions via rebellious and troublesome behavior. If these behavior changes are anticipated and addressed proactively, military youth can be expected to tolerate deployment stress well and even thrive if they are actively engaged by their community and family.

To help families cope, there are a variety of great resources specifically focused on military children and adolescents. Families may not realize the valuable resources their pediatrician can provide during such stressful times. Pediatricians offer credible developmental and behavioral expertise to families while being intimately aware of the importance that cultural issues, such as belonging to the military, play in overall family well-being.

**"News from the AAP" continued from page 14***Military Youth Deployment Support Resources*

Military pediatricians, in conjunction with the AAP, have created an animated feature for elementary-aged children to give them something they can relate to and use as a starting point for discussion. "Mr. Poe and Friends Discuss Reunion after Deployment" is a dynamic cartoon that provides young children with interesting characters and stories to relate to as they think about their own feelings in relation to deployment. The cartoon also highlights some of the unique challenges that reunion after deployment poses and helps normalize emotions that a child can wrestle with during these challenging times. (Video available at [www.aap.org/sections/unifserv/deployment/index.html](http://www.aap.org/sections/unifserv/deployment/index.html).)

Also included in this uniquely targeted video support program is "Military Youth Coping with Separation: When Family

Members Deploy." Created by a military adolescent medicine specialist, military pediatricians and the AAP for older children and adolescents, the video features interviews with real teens going through family member deployments and touches on the broad range of normal emotions and fears that an older child or teen may face. A great supplement to this video is the accompanying Interactive Military Youth Stress Management Plan, an interactive tool developed to help teens identify their specific stressors and develop methods to cope with them effectively. (Video and Stress Management Plan available at [www.aap.org/sections/unifserv/deployment/index.html](http://www.aap.org/sections/unifserv/deployment/index.html))

All of the videos mentioned above are available free of charge and can be ordered or watched online. It is recommended that a caregiver (parent, teacher, grandparent)

watch the selected video with the child/adolescent and spend time afterward discussing the feelings experienced during the video. Watching the videos with other children experiencing parental deployment can also be helpful. The intent is that each child will gain a better understanding of their own emotional reactions to deployment while learning positive ways to cope with these reactions.

In addition, there are other excellent military youth resources available to parents and youth-serving professionals. For a listing of these web links, visit [www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/links.html](http://www.aap.org/sections/uniformedservices/deployment/links.html).

Please become familiar with these resources and provide information and support to military children and youth when they visit your practice.

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