

## Washington Report: All in a day's work: a look at pediatrician advocacy in D.C.

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Through its federal advocacy, the Academy brings the child health perspective to discussions in the nation's capital on issues that impact children and families. Whether representing the Academy at a press conference or providing expert witness testimony, pediatricians often are the messengers delivering facts, insights and stories to policymakers, influencers and the general public. Their efforts help ensure children and their unique health needs are represented in these critical conversations.

Here is a look at one day of advocacy this spring, when pediatricians lent their voices and child health expertise to a wide range of issues being addressed in Washington:

**Morning:** The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee passes the AAP-supported Kevin and Avonte's Law, which provides resources and grant funding to protect children with developmental disabilities who wander from home. The evening prior, AAP Key Contact members with senators on the committee contacted their legislators, urging them to vote "yes" on the bill's passage.

In addition, the Food and Drug Administration announces it will allow corn masa flour to be fortified with folic acid to prevent birth defects. The Academy, March of Dimes and other health groups had been urging the agency to do so since a 2012 citizen's petition.

**11-11:45 a.m.:** AAP Section on Genetics and Birth Defects Executive Committee Chair Tracy Trotter, M.D., FAAP, joins a press call following the announcement. She emphasizes the role of the FDA decision in preventing neural tube defects that disproportionately affect children born to Hispanic women.



Left to right: Peter Ambler, founder and 501(c)(4) director, Americans for Responsible Solutions; Mark Rosenberg, M.D., MPP, president and CEO, Task Force for Global Health; Joseph Wright, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, member of the AAP Council on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention; Georges C. Benjamin, M.D., executive director, American Public Health Association; and Alice Chen, M.D., executive director, Doctors for America, participate in a panel discussion on the need for federal gun violence prevention research.

**Noon-1:15 p.m.:** Americans for Responsible Solutions hosts a panel at the National Press Club on the need for Congress to invest in federal gun violence prevention research. Joseph Wright, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, a member of the AAP Council on Injury, Violence and Poison

Prevention, discusses the impact of gun violence on children and how federal research is imperative to gun violence prevention. Dr. Wright also points out the role federal research has played in successfully addressing other pediatric health issues, such as sudden infant death syndrome.

**1-3 p.m.:** Lanre Falusi, M.D., FAAP, president of the AAP D.C. Chapter, testifies before the U.S. House of Representatives Democratic Steering and Policy Committee at a hearing titled "The Failure of Trickle Down Economics in the War on Poverty." Dr. Falusi shares the negative health and developmental consequences of childhood poverty, how federal safety net programs address these challenges and success stories of her own patients who rely on these programs.

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