

## AAP making progress on equity, diversity, inclusion, mental health

May 1, 2021

Lee Savio Beers, M.D., FAAP, President, American Academy of Pediatrics

Article type: [Letter from the President](#)

Topics: [Advocacy](#), [Diversity, equity and inclusion](#)

---



For me, spring is always a season of gratitude. I'm grateful for the warmer weather, the sunshine and the cherry blossoms that line the streets of my hometown, Washington D.C. (This year also will bring a *lot* of cicadas ... those, I could probably do without.)

Looking back on the first few months of 2021, I also am deeply grateful for the work of our Academy leaders and staff, who have had an incredible impact on children, families and pediatricians. Often, their contributions are quiet or unseen, but they make an enormous difference.

This month, I'd like to celebrate a few important accomplishments in our priority areas of equity, diversity and inclusion, and mental health. These accomplishments were possible only through the efforts of many working together toward a common purpose.

### Equity Agenda

We are making excellent progress on implementing our Equity Agenda Year 1 Workplan (<https://bit.ly/36xD2IG>). Here are a few examples.

As part of our commitment to "equip members with knowledge and skills to address equity, diversity, and inclusion," the Academy is making available the Pediatrics for the 21st Century program "Fighting Racism to Advance Child Health Equity: A Call to Action." This series of five 30-minute sessions is free to AAP members on PediaLink at <http://bit.ly/childhealth-racism>. The sessions focus on equipping pediatricians to advance child equity by applying an anti-racist lens to the systems that shape health and medicine. Topics include the impact of racism on child and adolescent health; how pediatricians can promote racial justice through clinical practice; and how individuals and institutions can build diversity and inclusion in pediatric medicine. Members are eligible to receive continuing medical education and Maintenance of Certification credit.

We also are committed to examining the internal structures of our organization through a lens of equity and anti-racism and making needed changes.

Finally, we will be releasing guidance on inclusive, anti-biased terminology and language. The guidance, titled Words Matter, encourages cultural humility, includes strategies for making messaging and content more welcoming and inclusive, and honors the rights of individuals and groups to define their own identities.

### Mental health

We continue to prioritize education, advocacy and raising awareness of the mental health crisis facing children and families.

In March, the AAP joined the Children's Hospital Association in launching a mental health awareness campaign highlighting the escalating crisis among children and youths and sharing ideas about what policymakers and communities can do to ensure families have access to services.

As a result of advocacy by the AAP and other champions, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 includes an additional \$80 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program. Funding will be provided so all states, Washington, D.C., and the territories can implement or expand pediatric mental health phone consultation programs. These programs are an incredibly important support and resource for primary care pediatricians across the country. The act also contains \$4 billion for other behavioral and mental health services at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and HRSA.

While we know there is much more to do, it is inspiring to look back over the past few months and see what we have accomplished through the hard work and dedication of our leaders and staff. My deepest appreciation to each one of you. I can't wait to see what more we can accomplish together.

#### **Related Content**

- [Additional Letters from the President](#)

Copyright © 2021 American Academy of Pediatrics