

2020: A year of endless challenges, amazing accomplishments

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2020 was not the year we thought it would be. We found ourselves confronting a global pandemic, economic recession, a national racial reckoning, growing mistrust in our country’s institutions and contentious national elections. Yet, through it all, the AAP and our pediatricians persevered to protect our patients and the public and to keep our mission alive and our work moving forward.



What we have accomplished in response to — and in spite of — the pandemic has been amazing. Together, we:

- mobilized a COVID-19 Response Team to monitor developments, craft strategy, create guidance and share information with members in real time;
- issued more than 70 evidence-based guidelines and policies, both COVID- and non-COVID-related;
- gathered data on pediatric populations that have become the gold standard when it comes to understanding the effects of COVID-19 on children;
- conducted extensive traditional and digital media outreach to urge families to return to their pediatricians;
- advocated to increase access to care, reverse declining vaccination rates and enable pediatricians to continue to provide care to children;
- worked to restore confidence in vaccines and strengthen the medical home-based vaccine delivery system;
- began forming our Child Health Improvement through Longitudinal Data (CHILD) registry to collect, store and analyze electronic health record data on U.S. children;
- shined a light on systems that perpetuate inequality and examined risk factors that contribute to health disparities and inequities;
- published our *Truth, Reconciliation, and Transformation* statement and passed a bylaws referendum that clearly states the AAP does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity;
- embarked on our Equity Agenda, which centers equity in all of our child health initiatives and increases diversity and inclusion within our organization and profession;
- waged campaigns to count all children in the 2020 Census and to make sure children counted in the 2020 elections;
- continued to address the epidemic of gun violence;
- implemented a comprehensive strategy to address child mental health and suicide and ensure mental and behavioral health care is integrated into the medical home;
- engaged leaders from multisector agencies and organizations in a National Children’s Health and Climate Leadership Forum;
- offered guidance and targeted solutions to support physician wellness;
- broke attendance records with our first-ever virtual National Conference & Exhibition with over 15,000 registrants, including more than 3,000 international attendees from 80 countries; and

- published our *Blueprint for Children*, which reflects on the state of our nation's children and recommends policies to promote healthy children, support secure families, build strong communities and reclaim America's role as a leading nation for youths.

I am grateful to our members, leaders and AAP staff, who made it possible for us to respond so effectively to the worst public health crisis of our lifetime and address problems that have been simmering over decades before the pandemic brought them to a boil. Among them are a growing need for mental health services for our nation's youths and racial inequality and injustices that cause Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native children to fare worse on nearly every measure of health, economic status, education and living conditions.

I am grateful for all we have learned and all we have accomplished. As the year comes to a close and I wrap up my term as your 90th president, I want to thank you for the incredible gift you have given me and our nation's families. In these times of uncertainty, fear and loss, you have remained dedicated to science, evidence and the short- and long-term health and well-being of children. By focusing on the right priorities, you have served as the voice America can rely on and proved that courage and hope can be contagious.

There are no easy solutions, and the challenges are far from over. But the Academy will continue to be responsive to the moment, vocal in the national debate and visible in our states and communities.

Being your virtual president has been my greatest honor, and I will continue to work alongside you to advance the health of children and families, support pediatricians, achieve equity and ensure that we — and our nation's children — come out on the other side of the pandemic safe and strong.

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