

## AAP National Conference: Dr. Dreyer: Keep supporting all children

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Almost half of pediatric patients are poor or in financial distress, and pediatricians should support the Academy's mission statement for *all* children, said AAP President Benard P. Dreyer, M.D., FAAP, as he reflected Saturday on efforts to advance the Poverty and Child Health strategic priority in the AAP Agenda for Children.

AAP advocacy also has focused on efforts to improve food insecurity, health equity, early brain and child development, lead toxicity, toxic stress, asthma, homelessness and immigrant child health.

“To solve any and all of these problems, we need to do something about child poverty,” said Dr. Dreyer. “We have realistic solutions that we know will work.”



Dr. Dreyer recapped AAP efforts to advocate for the needs of all children during his President's Address.

Dr. Dreyer called for strengthening AAP advocacy on government policies such as Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and affordable housing.

“We care about children's futures, and don't want to see them potentially trapped in unproductive, unhealthy lives and intergenerational poverty as adults.”

The needs of Central American children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border to flee violence also have been a top priority during Dr. Dreyer's presidency.

He noted that his life's work has focused on caring for immigrant children and families in New York City. He also has relatives who immigrated — legally and illegally — to the U.S.

AAP leaders recently visited the Texas border to see how unaccompanied minors were treated in Office of Refugee Resettlement facilities and visited with children and families at a church as they awaited release to their U.S. sponsors.

"I know they will add to the richness and fabric of our country," he said, lauding the Academy's efforts and resources (<http://bit.ly/2c5vyAL>). An upcoming policy from the AAP Immigrant Health Special Interest Group will focus on the treatment of unaccompanied minors and families.

The Academy also contributed to a report that offers recommendations to the Department of Homeland Security, including discontinuation of family detention centers, which it says are not appropriate or necessary for families and are not in the best interest of children.

Another major priority for the Academy has been the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender children, youths and parents. With the Academy and the North Carolina Chapter leading the way, a restrictive bill was defeated clearing the way for transgender youths to use the bathroom of the gender with which they identify. (See article at <http://bit.ly/2dmBc4t>.)

"The AAP has a long history of support for these groups; in fact, we often had to wait for the public to catch up with us," he noted.

Finally, heading into the national election, Dr. Dreyer urged members to access the AAP *Blueprint for Children: How the Next President Can Build a Foundation for a Healthy Future* (<http://bit.ly/2dyjxT2>). The document capitalizes on the opportunity to provide a plan for the new administration and Congress to improve the lives of children and families.

"Remember, it is all about *all* the children! We are their pediatricians, and we care about and for *all* children."

*For more coverage of the AAP National Conference & Exhibition visit <http://www.aappublications.org/collection/cme>. To watch Dr. Dreyer's full address along with other opening plenaries, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-rg8YTd2qQ>.*