

NEVADA



A State Child Health Policy Agenda 2021 and Beyond

Priorities and recommendations to foster child health and well-being, achieve health equity, eliminate health disparities, optimize lifespan outcomes, strengthen families, support our communities, and enhance the position of Nevada as a leading state for children.

Nevada Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Policy Goals

PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILDREN

All children, adolescents, and young adults from birth to the age of 26 years must have access to the highest-quality health care, so they can thrive throughout their lifespan. Policymakers must ensure that all children, regardless of their race, ethnicity, income, family composition or immigration status have:

- equitable, non-discriminatory access to affordable and high-quality health care coverage,
- insurance with comprehensive, pediatric-appropriate benefits,
- access to needed primary and subspecialty pediatric care and mental health services,
- access to necessary COVID-19 services, supports, and treatments, and
- comprehensive, family-centered care in a medical home.

PROMOTE SECURE FAMILIES

Together we can work to advance efforts to ensure that parents can give their children the best foundation for the future. Policymakers must ensure that all families have:

- work that provides a stable and adequate income and family-friendly benefits, including paid family medical and sick leave,
- safe, secure, and non-discriminatory housing,
- affordable and safe high-quality child care,
- access to adequate, healthy, nutritious foods throughout the year, and
- resources to support family placement and permanency within the child welfare system.

PROMOTE STRONG COMMUNITIES

Strong communities are the building blocks for secure families and healthy children. Policymakers must ensure that communities:

- are safe from violence and environmental hazards,
- provide high-quality early education, especially in segregated urban, suburban, and rural communities,
- support public health systems that protect children from infectious diseases and support maternal and child health, and
- respond effectively when disasters and public health emergencies occur.

ENSURE OUR STATE IS A LEADER FOR CHILDREN

Child health and well-being must be elevated and maintained as a priority in our state. Policymakers must develop and implement policies that:

- acknowledge racism as a public health crisis and work towards reducing racism through interdisciplinary partnerships with organizations that have developed campaigns against racism,
- fund and support public health and health services to help children grow into healthy adults,
- address environmental health and climate change issues that affect children, and
- address factors that make some children more vulnerable than others, such as race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual orientation or gender identity, and disability.

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GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The most effective way to prevent firearm-related injury to children is to keep guns out of homes and communities. Policymakers must develop and implement policies that:

- regulate access to guns including universal background checks, mandatory waiting periods, closure of the gun show loophole, and mental health restrictions for gun purchasers,
- ban assault weapons and high capacity magazine sales, as an effective strategy to reduce firearm-related injuries,
- hold adults criminally liable when a minor is likely to gain access to a negligently stored firearm regardless of whether the minor gains access, and
- enforce Nevada's "Red Flag" laws allowing families or law enforcement to petition a judge to remove a firearm from the possession of a person deemed at risk of harming themselves or others.

CHILDHOOD PREVENTATIVE CARE

Disease prevention is an important part of maintaining every child's overall good health. We call on policymakers to develop and implement:

- eliminating state laws permitting nonmedical exemptions to school entry immunization requirements,
- like in other states, empower minors as young as 12 to consent to medical treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV), and
- taxes on sugary drinks to decrease childhood obesity rates.

TOBACCO & E-CIGARETTES

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the US. To protect youth who are susceptible to the addictive properties of nicotine because their brains are still developing, policymakers must:

- vigorously enforce laws and regulations prohibiting the sale of tobacco and e-cigarettes to minors,
- codify in law that the minimum age to purchase tobacco and e-cigarette products is 21 years,
- ban candy and fruit flavored e-cigarettes and tobacco products which encourage youth smoking initiation, and
- increase taxes on all tobacco products to reduce youth tobacco use and to create new state revenue.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS & COVERAGE

Public and private health care insurance must ensure affordable coverage of essential benefits and remove operational barriers to timely access to care for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. Policy makers have the power to:

- ensure that Medicaid payment rates for all physician services are at least equivalent with Medicare rates,
- guarantee 12-months of continuous coverage for children enrolled with Medicaid, and
- grant former foster care young adults' access to Medicaid benefits through age 26.

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COVID-19

It is critical to acknowledge the differential impact COVID-19 has on African American, Native American and Latinx children, as well as children with disabilities and those living at or near poverty. Policymakers must:

- prioritize the opening of schools over bars, restaurants and casinos, and
- not make Medicaid cuts impacting children which are already inadequate for meeting the needs of all children, especially special-needs children, in Nevada.

IMMIGRANT CHILD HEALTH

Thirty-six percent of Nevadan children have at least one parent who is an immigrant, one-third of whom are undocumented. Children of immigrants born in the United States, and therefore eligible for Medicaid and CHIP, are nearly twice as likely to be uninsured as nonimmigrant children. To reduce the “chilling effect” in which families do not enroll eligible children in programs due to fear, policymakers must:

- allow all children and pregnant women in Nevada access to health insurance regardless of their immigration status,
- grant Medicaid benefits to undocumented immigrant children in Nevada, and
- increase care to lawfully residing immigrant pregnant women expanding of Medicaid coverage from 60 days after delivery to 365 days.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Punitive measures taken toward pregnant women, such as criminal prosecution and incarceration, have no proven benefits for infant health. Policymakers must assure the public of nonpunitive access to comprehensive care that meets the needs of the substance-abusing pregnant woman and her infant by:

- requiring hospital nurseries to adhere to a standardized plan for the evaluation and comprehensive treatment of infants at risk for or showing signs of withdrawal,
- funding illicit substances screening and treatment of pregnant women, and
- passing legislation that allows women to keep custody of their children when found positive for substances at delivery and enter a treatment program designed for mothers and children to stay together.

OTHER ISSUES

Additional advocacy issues important to members of the Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics include:

- mandate that insurance companies provide inpatient mental services for dual diagnosis patients (such as those with autism or severe learning disability),
- set medically accurate mandatory sex education standards, and
- set school start time after 8:30 AM for middle and high school.