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American Academy of Pediatrics

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Four hundred of the nation's top pediatric leaders discussed child health topics and health care transformation at the AAP Annual Leadership Forum (ALF) March 13-16. Investing in children was a key message at this year's meeting.

James Marks, M.D., M.P.H., senior vice president at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, presented findings of the foundation's report, *Time to Act: Investing in the Health of Our Children and Communities*. The report fit well with the AAP strategic priority plank Poverty and Child Health.

"Dr. Marks' stimulating, engaging review of child poverty provided great inspiration that we *can* make a difference," said John Chamberlain, M.D., FAAP, chair of the ALF Executive Committee. "His ability to synthesize the diverse components of the issue, summarize the opportunities for pediatricians and direct the AAP collectively provided a clear message that we must expand our role beyond our traditional constructs to make a difference."



Dr. Chamberlain

Following the presentation, the audience broke out by district to address Dr. Marks' call to action.

Ideas generated will be discussed at district meetings this summer so that action plans related to AAP priorities can be developed.

Aims of the ALF

The meeting had five aims:

- to draw on multiple areas of expertise within the Academy to advise and make recommendations to the Board of Directors;
- to promote communication and networking among the leaders of chapters, committees, councils and sections;
- to incorporate diverse perspectives in the discussion and debate of leading pediatric issues;
- to integrate and promote understanding of AAP strategic priorities and the policy development, education and advocacy functions of the Academy; and
- to provide leadership education and inspiration for AAP volunteer leaders.

ALF voters make recommendations to the AAP Board of Directors through the resolution process and rank their top 10 (see sidebar). Attendees also participated in discussions regarding five AAP priority areas, including children, adolescents and the media; combatting childhood adversity; global child health; childhood obesity; and poverty and child health.



Annual Leadership Forum
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Chapters • Committees • Councils • Sections



Attendees of the 2014 Annual Leadership Forum adopted 52 resolutions that will serve as advice to the Board of Directors on the direction of AAP policies and procedures.

Resolutions discussed, voted on

Resolutions serve as advice to the Board of Directors on the direction of AAP policies and procedures, and often become the "springboard" for AAP initiatives.

Reference committee hearings provided a venue for clarification of resolutions and allowed members and AAP staff to voice concerns and ideas.

Reference committee chairs Elizabeth Lange, M.D., FAAP, George Phillips, M.D., FAAP, and David Turkewitz, M.D., FAAP, presented their reports to the assembly, and voting members used electronic keypads to register their votes. Fifty-nine resolutions were presented, and 52 were adopted.

"The debate on the resolutions was incredibly vibrant, focused and respectful to all opinions. It was rewarding to have enough time to engage in the topics and listen to everyone who needed to speak and state their views," said Donald Miller, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, chair of the Chapter Forum Management Committee and leader of the resolution process.



Dr. Miller

2014 top 10 resolutions

1. Ban on marijuana advertising that could be perceived as directed to children
2. Human trafficking education as a component of medical education and pediatric training
3. Ratification on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
4. The risk of non-standard vaccine schedules
5. Expanding regulations on electronic cigarettes
6. The AAP medical home standard and certification
7. Universal paid parental leave
8. AAP policy and education regarding electronic cigarettes
9. Medical student membership
10. Staying politically neutral for universal support of children

Late resolution takes top spot

Although resolutions are due by Dec. 1, late resolutions can be submitted. One such resolution, “Ban on Marijuana Advertising that Could be Perceived as Directed to Children,” was submitted on the opening day of the ALF and ended up being ranked No. 1. The resolution calls for the Academy to advocate for a ban on marijuana product advertising that may be considered enticing to children.

“The legalization of marijuana is quite recent, and it is only now that we are seeing advertising directed toward children,” said the resolution’s author Paula Whiteman, M.D., FAAP, FACEP, California Chapter 2 vice president. “The volume and nature of this advertising could not be predicted.”

Dr. Whiteman’s resolution was backed by other chapters and sections.

Sessions well-received

Interactive workshops allowed ALF participants to hone and develop leadership skills. Sessions on Maintenance of Certification, strategic planning, team building, social media, succession planning and legal issues were engaging. In addition, workshops on state advocacy challenges and opportunities as well as Affordable Care Act implementation were popular among attendees.

A workshop titled, “Working Together: How to Build Physician Relationships in the Changing Healthcare Environment” led by Michael Klein, M.D., FAAP, chair of the AAP Surgical Advisory Panel, addressed the importance of collaboration between generalists and subspecialists, one of the ALF’s themes that carried into district breakfast meetings.

Chapter, committee, council and section leaders each held their own forums with agendas relevant to their groups/ constituencies.

“I was awed by the energy and commitment of everyone,” said Mark Del Beccaro, M.D., FAAP, chair of the Council Management Committee. “I saw it in our council meetings, starting with the orientation and then subsequently at each of our sessions. Council leaders were very appreciative of the board members’ attendance at their sessions as well.”

Elizabeth “Sooze” Hodgson, M.D., FAAP, chair of the Committee Forum Management Committee, expressed similar sentiment. “One of the committee forum attendees commented to me that this ALF seemed to energize people in a way previous ALFs had not. Very positive feedback.”

New leadership

At the close of the ALF, Dr. Chamberlain completed his term as ALF chair and passed the baton to Dr. Miller, who will chair the 2015 ALF.

“The hallmark of the ALF is it is greater than the sum of its parts,” Dr. Chamberlain said. “The richness of the discussion, diversity of perspective, depth of knowledge, breadth of experience and singular focus on the needs of children is unparalleled. The partnership between staff and volunteers is palpable, and the energy is seemingly endless. One leaves with a blissful fatigue, renewed in the role as a pediatric leader.”



Dr. Del Beccaro



Dr. Hodgson

RESOURCES

- For a list of 2014 resolutions, visit <http://www.aap.org/en-us/my-aap/chapters-and-districts/Resolutions/Pages/2014-Resolutions.aspx> (login required).
- For more information on the Annual Leadership Forum, contact Nicole Blankenship, in the AAP Division of Chapter and District Relations, at 800-433-9016, ext. 7862, or nblankenship@aap.org.

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