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THANK YOU TO OUR GRANT & CONTRACT AGENCIES

American Academy of Pediatrics
(immunizations, food insecurity)

Chicago Department of Public Health
(immunizations, lead poisoning)

Chicago Vaccine Partnership
(immunizations)

Cook County Department of Public Health
(immunizations)

Crown Family Philanthropies
(housing insecurity)

Illinois Department of Public Health
(adolescent health, immunizations, mental health, oral health, Reach Out and Read)

Illinois Public Health Institute
(breastfeeding)

Otho S. A. Sprague Memorial Institute
(housing insecurity)

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President's Column
Margaret Scotellaro, MD, FAAP

As we reflect on 2022 and look forward in 2023, I’d like to share some of the many amazing accomplishments of the Chapter and our strategic plan for the next three years.

On a personal level, I am honored and excited to move into my role as President of the Executive Committee of the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP). I am grateful for the guidance and mentorship of our immediate past President, Mary Dobbins, who provided strong leadership during the most difficult phase of the pandemic. Mary, along with Jennie Pinkwater and the entire ICAAP staff, supported pediatricians with constant resources and guidance as we maneuvered through the relentless challenges of school closures, shortages of providers, PPE and hospital beds and the development and implementation of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Many of you were involved in the creation of our strategic plan for FY 2023-2026. Through hours of discussion, review, and refinement we solidified our focus in the areas of Mental Health, Social Determinants of Health and Support and Engagement of our Members. In developing these strategic priorities, we reviewed 1) the current challenges facing Illinois children and families, 2) the work of our committees and grant-funded projects, and 3) the feedback from our members regarding their priorities for the Chapter. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) continues to be a top priority in all that we do within ICAAP.

As such it was important that DEI principles were woven into every aspect of our strategic plan rather than confining them to one initiative. We also considered the unique challenge of pediatric care from before birth into early adulthood. Under each pillar of the strategic plan, children’s needs during infancy, preschool, middle childhood, and adolescence were addressed. We are confident that this strategic plan will guide our efforts to best serve our members and support their work in caring for the children and families of Illinois.

In 2022 the Chapter netted a major increase in our grant funding, more than doubling our budget for FY 2023. This amazing growth enabled the onboarding of additional staff to support our expanding programs in vaccination, housing and food insecurity, and Reach Out and Read, among others.

While I cannot share all the incredible work ICAAP has achieved over the last year, here are a few additional highlights:

- Illinois Vaccinates Against Covid-19 (I-VAC), a joint effort of ICAAP, ECHO Chicago, and the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians provides a variety of resources and education via COVID-19 vaccine bootcamps, virtual collaboratives, a pod-cast and online tools to support providers in outpatient, urgent care and hospital settings in providing COVID-19 vaccination to all eligible patients. I-VAC publishes a monthly newsletter and pediatric vaccination report...
The Governor recently announced the Illinois Children’s Mental Health Plan. This $2.5 million federally funded program will create a partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, the Department of Human Services, Illinois DocAssist and ICAAP to increase mental health consultation services, provide mental health education and training opportunities to health care professionals, and grow the network of mental health providers for youth in Illinois.

In addition to its work on education and screening for housing insecurity in pediatric care, ICAAP’s Collaborative on Child Homelessness in Illinois is working on the National Advocacy Campaign to Change the Definition of Homelessness to include individuals in temporary living situations such as staying “doubled-up”. Use of the current definition by housing agencies excludes children from receiving services available to unhoused adults thus jeopardizing their development, health and safety.

Reach Out & Read Illinois continues to grow with over 150,000 children and families served in 126 clinics in 2022. This year, the state approved a line item in the annual budget of $400,000 for Reach Out and Read!

ICAAP’s Committee on Government Affairs had several important victories in 2022. The legislature finally passed an increase in the Vaccines for Children immunization administration reimbursement from $6.40 to $16.15. Other wins include the state funding for Reach Out and Read, and the passage of the $3.4 million Firearm Safe Storage Education Campaign. With the support of the Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (COCAN), changes to the Sexual Assault Survivor Treatment Act were passed to better serve and track data for pediatric sexual assault survivors.

Refugee Immigrant Child Health Initiative (RICHI) serves to educate healthcare providers to assess the medical, legal, and social needs of immigrants and provides opportunities to advocate for legislation and policies that benefit immigrant children and families. With the recent arrival in the Chicago area of thousands of asylum-seekers from the southern border, RICHI has worked with other local groups to support families in obtaining housing, medical care and other vital services.

With the start of the new year we look forward to the expansion of the redeveloped Taskforce on Bias and Anti-Racism and the newly established Taskforce on Human Trafficking, a joint initiative under COCAN and RICHI.

Thank you to our members who have volunteered their time and expertise in committees, educational endeavors, and advocacy initiatives. Many thanks to the ICAAP staff, without whose remarkable work, none of these accomplishments would be reached. I look forward to our continued growth and support for children, families and our ICAAP members in 2023 and beyond.
Our Vision for the Future: An Overview of Strategic Planning for the Illinois Chapter

Jennie Pinkwater, MNM

In 2021, the Illinois Chapter embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning project to guide our work through 2026. ICAAP surveyed membership and worked with leadership to identify the top priorities for pediatricians and the families they serve.

It was not a surprise that mental health was on everyone’s radar and the top focus, especially after two years of COVID–19 restrictions and challenges for our children in Illinois. ICAAP also had lengthy discussions about how to support families with fewer resources, focus on social determinants of health, support members and healthcare workers, and advocate for policies that would benefit all families.

During the strategic planning discussion, ICAAP board members looked at age groups of children and brainstormed strategies and priorities in each category, as we would if they were in the exam room.

ICAAP’s mission is to promote and advocate for optimal child, youth, and family well-being and access to quality healthcare while supporting our members. As we continue to engage in our fully-funded projects in immunizations, lead prevention, Reach Out & Read, adolescent health and breastfeeding training programs for our members, the focus for the next three years is to move the needle on our top strategic priorities: Mental Health, Social Determinants of Health, and Member Support.

ICAAP will prioritize strategic initiatives to combat racism and improve diversity and inclusion, including prioritizing mental health support for pediatricians that work in communities of color, lead work to advocate for pregnant persons, families, and children (especially Black and Brown families) to be a part of social determinants of health policies, and recruit more board members reflective of the communities they serve.

Continued investment from ICAAP members is critical to securing the success of this strategy. If you would like to get involved or need further information about ICAAP’s vision for the future, please reach out to Jennie Pinkwater, MNM, Executive Director of the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics at info@illinoisaap.com.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the strategic planning process!

Access to the full issue of IL Pediatrictian is a benefit of membership in ICAAP! If you want to read the rest of this issue or have any questions about membership, please email Cindy Ogrin at cogrin@illinoisaap.com