

Pediatric Mental Health Newsletter

APRIL 2025

Building Capacity and Confidence for Pediatric Mental Healthcare Together

Welcome to our second pediatric mental health newsletter. As we continue our momentum around pediatric mental health in 2025, we will be issuing bi-monthly updates on our work and pediatric mental health care work in the state as it relates to pediatricians.

ICAAP Mental Health Resources

- [Pediatric Mental Health Resources & Guidance](#)
- [On-Demand Pediatric Mental Health Webinars](#)
- [Youth Suicide Prevention Resources](#)



Pediatric Mental Health Conference

Join the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) and Illinois DocAssist (IDA) for our in-person Pediatric Mental Health Conference on **Thursday, May 15 from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm** at The I Hotel and Conference Center in Champaign, Illinois! It will be a day filled with expert insights, engaging and interactive learning sessions, and opportunities to connect with peers through networking and collaboration.

Register Here by May 1, 2025

For more information about the conference, including the full agenda, registration details, and hotel information, please visit our [Conference Webpage](#).



ISMS Logo The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is accredited by the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics designates this live conference for a maximum of 5.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Medical Assistants can submit Certificates of Attendance to their accrediting board to claim credit for participation in the live conference.



Earn CME & Develop Your Skills

Please join us for these upcoming ICAAP webinars related to pediatric mental health! Click [here](#) to register for any of the events below.

 **May 9 at 8am**

Adolescent Health Virtual Mini-Conference: Substance Use and Prevention

UPDATES FROM:

The Illinois Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative

The Illinois Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative, a Pritzker Administration effort that is working to make behavioral health services for youth more coordinated and easily accessible across the state, recently launched the BEACON tool for families and those who work with them.

BEACON, developed by Google in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative, creates a single entry point where parents—or anyone helping a child or family find services—can find out what state-funded and community-based services a youth may be eligible for and how to connect with them.

BEACON is a secure platform that can link families with Resource Coordinators in the Division of Mental Health who can help find appropriate resources. The tool also offers parents the option to create an account where they can upload documents related to their child’s care and choose to work with a navigator who can provide support for navigating the process of obtaining school-

based services. Enabling state agency partners to work together in one platform, BEACON also speeds up the process of obtaining residential treatment and in-home support for youth with complex needs.

The Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative is continuing to develop other tools to further improve the state’s ability to respond to the needs of its children. Learn more about BEACON from Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation Chief Officer Dana Weiner [here](#) and by visiting the website for the Initiative: [IDHS: Chief Officer for Children’s Behavioral Health Transformation](#)



New Partnership to Expand Mental Health Services for CPS Students

All CPS high school students will now have access to free, online therapy and counseling through a new partnership between CPS, United Health Care, and [Hazel Health](#).

Use this [informational flyer](#) to raise family awareness about this new program. If families are curious to learn more about the Hazel Health program, please direct them to our CPS’ Hazel website at getstarted.hazel.co/district/cps

Pediatric Anxiety Quality Improvement Project



In partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) is recruiting primary health care providers to join a 4-month learning collaborative and quality improvement project focused on anxiety. The goal of this project is to enhance identification and management of pediatric anxiety in primary care by implementing standardized screening processes, structured follow-up, and provider education using quality improvement methods.

This project will have a quality improvement (QI) component. Practices must provide primary care to patients aged 11 - 17 in Illinois, complete monthly de-identified retrospective chart reviews, and submit monthly PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) worksheets. Clinical teams will engage in monthly educational sessions on: diagnosis and treatment of anxiety in the pediatric primary care setting, screening tools, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) tools, medication management, and more.

Webinars will be held on select Thursdays at 8am CST: May 1, May 29, June 26, July 24, September 4

Benefits of participating:

- Improve access to quality care for patients affected by anxiety.
- Increase knowledge regarding best practices for identifying and managing anxiety in children.
- Network and problem solve with others.
- *Earn American Board of Pediatrics Part 4 Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credit (pending approval) and CME credits.*

Who should apply:

- Pediatric primary care clinicians and practices in Illinois who are interested in improving practice processes around screening and management of anxiety.

April

- Submit online registration
- Receive onboarding materials

May-Aug

- Attend one session per month
- Conduct monthly de-identified chart reviews
- Conduct PDSA cycles

September

- Complete project evaluation survey
- Participation credits awarded (MOC 4 and CME, if eligible)

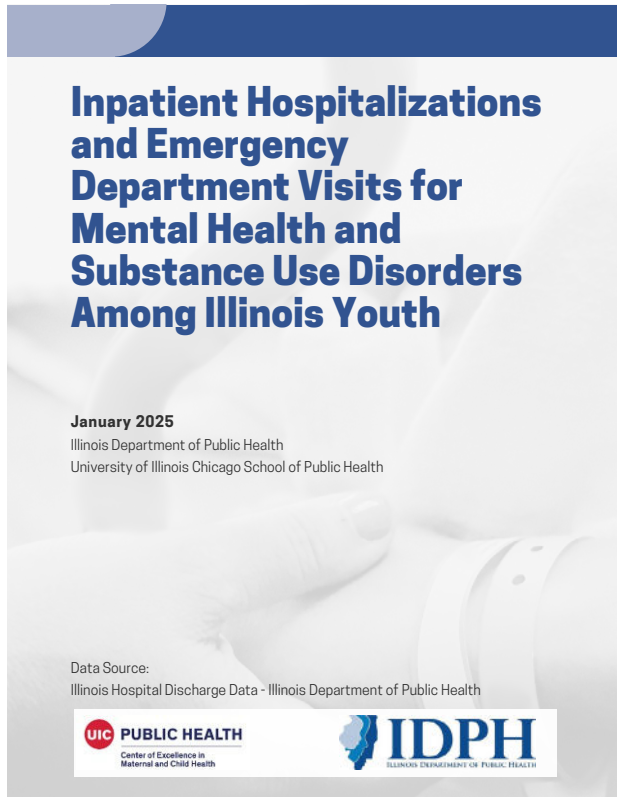
Register [here](#) or by scanning the QR code by Wednesday, April 30.
For more information, contact Lauren at Ibarnfield@illinoisAAP.com.



The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is accredited by the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. The Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics designates each live webinar for a maximum of 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. Nurses, Nurse Practitioners, and Medical Assistants can submit Certificates of Attendance to their accrediting board to claim credit for participation in the live webinars.



Upcoming Projects



New IDPH Data Brief: Inpatient Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits for Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Among Illinois Youth

In collaboration with colleagues at UIC SPH, the Office of Women’s Health and Family Health Services at IDPH recently published a data brief on pediatric hospital encounters for mental health and substance use disorders. This analysis compared the rate of hospital encounters before and after the start of the COVID 19 pandemic in various groups of children and demonstrated significant increases, especially in the rate of encounters for suicidal behaviors. This data brief presents trends in hospitalization and ED visit rates for MHSU disorders among Illinois children and adolescents ages 3-17 (“youth”) before (2018-2019) and after (2021-2022) the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can view the report in full, as well as the appendix, [here](#).



Mental Health Peer Advisors

A team of pediatric health care clinicians from throughout the state have joined ICAAP’s Mental Health Peer Advisors to help establish communities of learning and practice around mental health care delivery in the pediatric primary care space. A submission form for those who are looking for peer support will be launching soon on the ICAAP website!

Please reach out to Lauren at lbarnfield@illinoisaaap.com with any questions.



AAP Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health

We know that social media use can play a significant role in the relationships and experiences that impact children and teens’ mental health. The [AAP Center of Excellence on Social Media and Youth Mental Health](#) provides all kinds of resources for pediatricians and parents to help guide these conversations.

Resources include a glossary of digital media platforms commonly used by children and teens, conversation guides for parents and pediatricians, and school phone policy resources. There is also a dedicated library of webinars, podcasts, and more.



Consultation and resources
for pediatric and perinatal
mental health



Consultation line: **866-986-2778**
Open Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

Free Pediatric Mental Healthcare Consultation and Resources

Any Illinois health care or school-based clinician can access free expert psychiatric advice and referral resources to address the mental health needs of their pediatric and perinatal patients. It's like having a knowledgeable and trusted colleague to turn to for guidance throughout your workday.

Learn more about Illinois DocAssist [here](#).

DocAssist Open Office Hours Clinical Pearls, Conversations and Consultation

Join an Illinois DocAssist psychiatric consultant for a series of free virtual open office hours. Learn about a pediatric mental health topic and get your questions answered.

Learn more and register [here](#).

May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

Mental Health Awareness Month is the perfect time to recognize the importance of prioritizing mental wellness - not only for the children and families you serve but also for yourselves.



Take a Moment for You

Here are some ways to support your mental health:

- **Prioritize self-care**
Set boundaries, take breaks, and engage in activities that recharge you.
- **Connect with peers**
Lean on your team for support and discussion about shared experiences.
- **Seek professional support when needed**
Advocate and care for your mental health as much as you would care for your patient's mental health.
- **Utilize our resources**
Take advantage of the educational tools and training we provide to ease the burden of navigating pediatric mental health challenges.
- **Explore [AAP physician wellness resources](#)**
The AAP offers several physician health and wellness tools, including guidance on maintaining work-life balance, recognizing burnout, and accessing mental health support.