

# COCHI Newsletter



As spring arrives across Illinois, COCHI continues its vital work connecting healthcare, early childhood, education, and housing partners around a shared mission: ensuring that every child in our state has a safe, stable place to call home. In this issue, we recap our quarterly meeting, highlight Healthy Homes Month, share helpful resources, and remind our members of ways to get involved.

## Housing Insecurity by the Numbers

The urgency of our work is reflected in the data. Housing instability remains one of the most significant social determinants of health for Illinois children.

**15,209**

pregnant persons in IL had problems paying the rent, mortgage, or other bills (2022)

**50%+**

of families facing insecurity have children under age 6

**~80%**

of Chicago residents facing housing insecurity are Black

**116%**

increased in Illinois statewide homelessness, 2023-2024

**14,571**

Illinois Point-in-Time Count (2025)

**17 of 19**

Illinois CoCs saw increased in homelessness in 2024

Children experiencing housing insecurity face heightened risk for chronic medical conditions, food insecurity, developmental delays, and frequent disruptions to education. Infants born to persons experiencing homelessness are more likely to be born prematurely, have low birth weight, and require neonatal intensive care. Addressing housing instability early is a critical investment in lifelong child health.



## Spring Program Highlights

### Housing Insecurity and Homelessness in Illinois Among the Pregnant and Parenting

COCHI's Quarterly Meeting on March 25, 2026 featured speakers from Start Early on the Housing Insecurity and Homelessness in Illinois Among the Pregnant and Parenting (HIHIPP) Project. View the [slides](#) and [recording](#).

### Cross-Sector Housing & Health Training

A CME-accredited webinar is available now for clinicians interested in learning more about serving their patients experiencing housing insecurity. [Watch the recording](#) or earn CME/CE by enrolling in the course on our [Learning Management System](#).

## Healthy Homes Month: April 2026

Join us in recognizing that stable housing is more than just a roof over your head and that everyone deserves access to a safe and healthy home.

View and download this list of [Healthy Homes resources](#) to share with your networks!

Eight Principles of a Healthy Home:

1. Clean
2. Safe
3. Dry
4. Well Maintained
5. Pest Free
6. Contaminant Free
7. Well Ventilated
8. Temperature Controlled

## Resources for Pediatric Clinicians

Pediatricians and other healthcare providers in Illinois are uniquely positioned to identify and respond to housing insecurity among their patients. ICAAP and COCHI offer several resources to help:

### Model of Care Best Practices and Practice Assessment

This resource includes best practices and quality improvement guidance, along with a self-guided assessment, to help practices implement the Model of Care to support comprehensive health care.

Available at: [illinoisAAP.org/housing-insecurity](http://illinoisAAP.org/housing-insecurity)

### Chicago/Cook County Housing Referral Tool

A step-by-step referral pathway tool helping providers quickly connect patients and families facing housing challenges to appropriate local services and resources.

Available at: [illinoisAAP.org/referral-tool](http://illinoisAAP.org/referral-tool)

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## Policy Update

### SNAP Updates and Job Ready IL

New SNAP work requirements took effect in Illinois on February 1, 2026. Recipients subject to Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) [work rules](#) who do not meet work requirements and do not claim an exemption can only receive SNAP for three months. Some families may begin losing benefits as early as May 1, 2026. View the resources below for support.

- [IDHS: Connecting to Opportunities to Meet Work Requirements](#)
- [Job Ready IL](#) is a free online training program and is approved by IDHS as a Qualifying Work Program for the SNAP Work Requirement.

### HUD Mixed Status Proposed Rule

On February 20, HUD [published](#) a proposed rule that would separate families with mixed immigration statuses and require immigration verification for everyone, including U.S. citizens, living in HUD-assisted housing, regardless of age. If finalized and implemented, this proposal would cause nearly 80,000 families to lose their housing assistance, including nearly 37,000 children. Sign up for the [National Low Income Housing Coalition's listserv](#) to stay updated on this and other federal advocacy updates.

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## Get Involved with COCHI

COCHI membership is free and open to organizations and individuals committed to ending child homelessness in Illinois. Members receive invitations to quarterly meetings, access to training resources, and opportunities to collaborate with cross-sector partners. Reach out to Abby Creek at [acreek@illinoisap.com](mailto:acreek@illinoisap.com) to join today.

### Upcoming COCHI Quarterly Meeting - June 24

Our next quarterly meeting will be held in-person at The Night Ministry from 1-2:30pm. We will have a short educational presentation on mental health first aid and trauma-informed care followed by networking time.

Light refreshments will be provided. Space is limited. [Register now!](#)

## Partner Events and Announcements

### Chicago Early Childhood Resource Finder

Birth to Five Illinois Region 1-A is pleased to announce the launch of the new Chicago Early Childhood & Community Resource Finder (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)). This central resource hub is helpful to staff serving Chicago families with young children and/or sharing directly with families. Please share this resource with your networks.

### Equity from the Start: Centering Community Well-Being in Early Childhood Systems – April 28-30

This year's Partner Plan Act Conference dives into how early childhood collaborations can intentionally build systems that prioritize community well-being through nurturing relationships, strengthening trust, and fostering shared leadership. Virtual and free to attend. [Register here](#)

### Healthcare Providers in the Edwardsville Region!

Join EverThrive's 3-part Provider Workshop Series focused on improving maternal health outcomes. Learn about maternal mortality, social drivers of health, and the impact of mental health & substance use. Spring Cohort (all sessions required): May 4, May 11, May 18, 10:00-11:30 AM via Zoom. [Fill Out Form](#)

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## COCHI Leadership Team Spotlight

*Each newsletter, a different COCHI Leadership Team Member and their organization will be featured.*

Abby Creek is the Senior Program Manager of Health Equity Initiatives at the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP). She joined ICAAP in August 2022 and has supported COCHI since then, stepping into the leadership role in June 2025 when ICAAP Senior Director, Mary Elsner, retired. In her role at ICAAP, Abby leads key equity-focused efforts across the organization, including projects on housing, immigration, ACEs, and lead poisoning prevention.

COCHI is a program of ICAAP, which is a nonprofit organization of over 2,000 pediatricians in Illinois dedicated to improving the health and well-being of infants, children, and adolescents throughout the state. The organization advocates for optimal child, youth, and family well-being and access to quality healthcare by championing legislation, providing continuing medical education, and collaborating with community partners on a wide range of issues in pediatric health.

Interested in staying up to date with all of ICAAP's initiatives? [Subscribe](#) to receive our weekly e-newsletter, sent every Wednesday and open to both ICAAP members and non-members.



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## Contact & More Information

### Stay Connected

Join the COCHI mailing list for updates on COCHI meetings, trainings, and advocacy. Email Abby Creek [acreek@illinoisAAP.com](mailto:acreek@illinoisAAP.com)

### ICAAP Events

Visit our webpage to stay updated on all ICAAP programming [illinoisAAP.org/events](https://illinoisAAP.org/events)

**Together, we can ensure every Illinois child has the stable home they deserve.**

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