



Subspecialty Advocacy and Communications Toolkit

Colleagues:

Since its founding in 1930, advocacy for children has been a core focus of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Today, the Academy's active role in promoting the needs of pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, and the children for whom they provide care forms a critical component of our advocacy work in our nation's capital and across the country. Through our members, our chapters, and our staff in our offices in Illinois and Washington, DC, the Academy works to promote a number of policies relevant to subspecialists, including medical research for children, funding for medical education, child access to needed providers through appropriate payment, and a pediatric workforce able to meet the needs of children across the country.

AAP subspecialty sections are an important venue for engaging in advocacy specific to individual medical and surgical subspecialties. Through subspecialty sections, individuals of the same subspecialty can come together to leverage their specialized expertise and amplify their unique voice to further policy for the children they treat. AAP subspecialty section staff are important partners and resources for subspecialty members in advancing the Academy's advocacy agenda.

Advocacy requires sustained effort, and, in partnership with our pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists, we can continue to make critical advancements in the interest of child health. As part of our goal of advancing subspecialty advocacy, we are thrilled to share with you the Subspecialty Advocacy Toolkit, which contains information and resources to help you connect with the Academy's subspecialty advocacy activities.

We hope you find this resource to be useful, and we look forward to working with you in the future. If you have questions or comments about the AAP's advocacy work for subspecialists, please be in touch. And thank you for all you are doing for children and families. The vitality of the Academy depends on your hard work and engagement.

Sincerely,

Kyle E. Yasuda, MD, FAAP
President

Table of Contents

Advocacy for Pediatric Medical Subspecialists and Pediatric Surgical Specialists	3
How to Engage and Contact Relevant Staff	3
Opportunities to Interact with AAP Advocacy Staff	3
Advocacy Planning for AAP Subspecialty Sections	3
Federal Advocacy	3
Grassroots Advocacy: AAP Key Contact Program	3
How to Become a Key Contact	3
Academic and Subspecialty Advocacy Washington Report	4
Policy Updates for Newsletters	4
FederalAdvocacy.aap.org: Federal Advocacy Online Resource Center	4
State Advocacy	4
How to Connect with Your AAP Chapter	4
State Advocacy Resources	5
AAP Legislative Conference	5
Advocacy Communications	5
Authoring Op-Eds	5
Become a #Tweetiatrician and Advocate on Social Media	5
Engaging in Other Advocacy Communications Activities	6

Advocacy for Pediatric Medical Subspecialists and Pediatric Surgical Specialists

The Academy engages in advocacy across a wide spectrum of child health issues, including a host of issues that impact the care pediatric subspecialists provide, at all levels of government. In the sections that follow, you will find information on how to engage in federal and state advocacy issues, as well as in advocacy communications.

How to Engage and Contact Relevant Staff

In general, advocacy activities related to subspecialty issues should be coordinated through relevant AAP sections. The designated AAP section staff manager for each section can reach out to the federal advocacy, state advocacy, and advocacy communications staff with inquiries and to coordinate activities. Staff managers have access to a continually updated list of appropriate staff contacts for various issues.

Opportunities to Interact with AAP Advocacy Staff

AAP advocacy staff are on hand at events throughout the year to engage with AAP subspecialty sections on policy issues, including:

- National Conference & Exhibition
- Pediatric Academic Societies meeting
- Annual Leadership Forum
- Legislative Conference

Advocacy staff are happy to meet with subspecialty section executive committees either in person or by phone to give updates on timely advocacy issues and to discuss advocacy strategies on issues important to the section. AAP section staff managers can contact the federal or state advocacy teams to schedule a time.

Advocacy Planning for AAP Subspecialty Sections

Pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists treat a diverse array of patient populations, focus on a variety of health care conditions, and have unique practice considerations. These differences often lend themselves to both challenges and specific advocacy opportunities. Subspecialists are encouraged to track and raise issues of concern to their subspecialty and to work with the federal and state advocacy teams for additional guidance and support on how to best advance their priorities.

Federal Advocacy

The AAP maintains an office in Washington, DC with a number of lobbyists and policy experts on federal policy issues relevant to child health and subspecialty issues. If a section is interested in advocating on a particular policy issue at the federal level, the AAP section staff manager should contact the Washington office staff person assigned as the contact point for that section. Below are additional ways to engage in federal advocacy.

Grassroots Advocacy: AAP Key Contact Program

Key Contacts are AAP members who are interested in receiving advocacy opportunities and timely policy updates from the AAP Washington Office on federal legislation and other issues important to the Academy.

Through regular e-mail communication with specific requests for action, the Washington Office keeps Key Contacts informed of the latest legislative developments affecting children and pediatricians.

How to Become a Key Contact

E-mail kids1st@aap.org with your name, AAP ID if known, and your preferred e-mail address.

Academic and Subspecialty Advocacy Washington Report

The AAP Washington Office compiles on a biannual basis a detailed report providing the latest federal policy updates for pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists and giving in-depth information on a variety of issue areas. This report is published each year before the Annual Leadership Forum (ALF) in the winter and again in the fall before the AAP National Conference & Exhibition (NCE). It is distributed through AAP section staff managers and sections are encouraged to share the report with their members.

Policy Updates for Newsletters

The state-of-play for public policy issues is constantly changing in Washington and in state capitals around the country, and AAP advocacy staff are always happy to provide the latest developments for section newsletters or other needs. AAP section staff managers can contact the federal advocacy team at any time for help with these issues.

FederalAdvocacy.aap.org: Federal Advocacy Online Resource Center

Visit the AAP Federal Advocacy website at [FederalAdvocacy.aap.org](https://www.federaladvocacy.aap.org) to find federal advocacy resources and tools, including:

- An Action Center where you can contact federal legislators directly on current federal child health policy priorities.
- Background information on current AAP federal child health issues advancing in Congress.
- A media center where you can read recent opinion pieces written by pediatricians.
- [Highlight](#) the importance of pediatric research with a thank you note to your members of Congress each time you are awarded a federal grant.

State Advocacy

Advocacy by AAP chapters and members at the state and local levels, coupled with the AAP's federal efforts, helps to advance the pediatric health agenda across the country. Integration and alignment of advocacy priorities and messages strengthens our strategy and outcomes.

AAP chapters are the locus of state advocacy efforts. [They](#) have established identities, brands, and reputations and are respected for their authority, expertise, and reliability when it comes to state pediatric advocacy issues. Advocacy is part of the work of every AAP chapter and member engagement in this activity is the key to success. Each chapter considers the unique needs, opportunities, and challenges in its state and establishes a related advocacy agenda. Chapter involvement by pediatric subspecialists can help inform and shape that agenda and advocacy activities.

The AAP State Advocacy Team and the Committee on State Government Affairs support chapters and members seeking to influence state and local public policy on behalf of children's health and well-being and to advance the field of pediatrics through:

- Consultation and technical assistance.
- Policy analysis and strategy development.
- Resources and research.
- Serving as a clearinghouse on advocacy activities in other states and chapters.
- Integration and alignment with AAP advocacy initiatives.

How to Connect with Your AAP Chapter

Reach out to your [chapter executive director](#) and let them know about your interest and issues. Executive directors can link you to chapter leadership, advocacy committees, and lobbyists.

State Advocacy Resources

A wealth of AAP resources to support state advocacy work is available on the aap.org [State Advocacy page](#) (aap.org/stateadvocacy). Visit to access briefs on key state issues, advocacy action guides, infographics, advocacy planning and education guides, and the [latest news from the states](#).

Advocacy Training

AAP Legislative Conference

Each year, the AAP holds its annual Legislative Conference in Washington. The conference brings together pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists from across the country who share a passion for child health advocacy. Participants attend skills-building workshops, hear from guest speakers, learn about policy priorities impacting children and pediatricians and go to the Hill to urge Congress to support strong child health policies.

The conference features a **Pediatric Subspecialty Advocacy Track**. The track features specific workshops, advocacy and educational opportunities for subspecialists, including a skills-building workshop on how to frame subspecialty expertise to legislators and build relationships with congressional staff, advocacy on legislative priorities especially relevant to pediatric subspecialists and the patients they treat, networking opportunities, and more.

AAP Subspecialty Sections have the opportunity to sponsor members to attend the Legislative Conference. Sections can create a competitive scholarship application process or otherwise identify members whom they think would benefit from attendance at the conference. AAP section staff managers can work with the AAP Washington Office to reserve conference slots and learn more.

Advocacy Communications

In addition to issue area experts, the AAP has advocacy communications specialists to amplify the voice of the pediatric subspecialist beyond the halls of legislatures and advance child health policy nationally.

Authoring Op-Eds

Op-eds are an effective medium to communicate your opinion about a timely issue in your local or state newspaper. By publishing an op-ed, you can use your unique child health expertise as a pediatric medical subspecialist or pediatric surgical specialist to paint a vivid picture of a policy issue and help move the needle to advance legislation or public policy. AAP staff are available to provide guidance on writing and pitching op-eds on timely policy issues impacting subspecialists. If you are interested in learning more about op-ed opportunities, AAP section staff managers should reach out to our advocacy communications team.

Become a #Tweetiatician and Advocate on Social Media

Twitter is a powerful tool that allows individuals and organizations to amplify messages, connect with new and diverse networks, and gain access to local-, state- and federal-level decision-makers. As a pediatrician, Twitter also offers you the opportunity to be part of a community that encourages the exchanging of ideas around child health and your specific specialty, while not being constrained by time or geography. Advocacy communications staff can present to AAP section executive committees interested in learning more about social media and support individual members' interest in advancing understanding of their specialty online.

To stay up-to-date on child health news, follow and engage with AAP on social media via [@AmerAcadPeds](#), [@AAPPres](#), [@AAPNews](#) and [@healthychildren](#). You also can subscribe to AAP's official #tweetiatician list on Twitter by visiting <https://twitter.com/AmerAcadPeds/lists/tweetiaticians>.

Engaging in Other Advocacy Communications Activities

If you have an issue plaguing your specialty that you want to draw attention to, if you are aware of new research in your field that could be used as an advocacy tool, if you want to promote your advocacy interests in a broader way, or if you have any other communications-related inquiry for the Academy, encourage the AAP staff manager who staffs your section to submit a request through the AAP Public Affairs Portal. AAP external affairs staff will review your request and recommend the best communications tools to meet your needs.