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ACCAP’s Advocacy Day 2012
Growing Stronger Every Year!

On May 11, ACCAP members, parents, and youth stormed Capitol Hill to educate Members of Congress on children’s mental health and child and adolescent psychiatry! This year:

- We were 210 people strong, including:
  - 21 youth;
  - 46 parents;
  - 53 residents;
  - and 2 medical students.
- ACCAP’s Campaign for America’s Kids supported 54 parents and youth and 22 residents.
- We represented 45 states and Puerto Rico.
- We visited 190 Congressional offices.
- We focused on 3 main issues during our Congressional meetings:
  - funding for a pediatric sub-specialty and child mental health specialty loan forgiveness program;
  - increased funding for research, services and medical education funding;
o and passage of legislation on pediatric drug shortages.

Thank you to those who traveled to DC to advocate for the needs of your patients and profession – we look forward to seeing you next year!

The House and Senate Pass FDA User Fee Reauthorization Bills and Permanently Extends PREA and BPCA
Conference Committee likely in June

As part of the recent reauthorization of the FDA user fee programs, the House and Senate voted to permanently reauthorize the Pediatric Research Equity Act (PREA) and the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act (BPCA) and provide new tools to help address the shortage of prescription medications.

PREA requires pharmaceutical companies to study the effectiveness of pharmaceuticals in children, while BPCA awards pharmaceutical companies an extra six months of patent exclusivity for conducting additional requested studies on their medications. Prior to this new legislation, BPCA and PREA had to be reauthorized every five years. The new bills also require prescription drug manufacturers to alert the federal government about any potential shortages of a prescription medication, which was previously voluntary.

There are differences between the bills passed by the House and Senate and they will now go to conference committee to reconcile the differences. Key differences that AACAP is monitoring are:

- A House provision that requires the government to publicly distribute any information on potential medication shortages;
- A House provision that establishes criteria for addressing the shortage of a Schedule II medication; and
- A Senate provision that would make public the medical, statistical and clinical pharmacology reviews issues between 2002-2007 for medications applying for market exclusivity under BPCA.

Members of the conference committee have not yet been named. Once they are named we will alert you if one of your members of Congress is appointed.

AACAP Hosts a Congressional Briefing on Loan Forgiveness

On April 23, AACAP hosted a Congressional briefing, supported by AACAP’s Campaign for America’s Kids, on “The Future of Pediatric Mental Health Care: Challenges and Opportunities” The briefing drew Congressional staff to discuss the challenges facing pediatric mental health care, such as the shortage of shortages of child and adolescent psychiatrists, and also the solutions to alleviate the problems in accessing care. The panel discussion was led by AACAP’s President Elect Paramjit Joshi, M.D. and featured Greg Fritz, M.D., Barry Sarvet, M.D., medical student Tori DeLucia, and Rebecca Glathar, the Executive Director of NAMI Utah. The panel shared statistics on
the lack of child and adolescent psychiatrists and discussed how the additional financial burden of choosing a subspecialty is often a deterrent to training beyond a primary residency. They also discussed the many burdens put on families when seeking mental health care. Finally, the panel addressed solutions to improve access, such as funding a loan repayment program for child psychiatrists and other child mental health professionals, and pediatric collaborative care models. Click here for video highlights of the briefing!

AACAP Comments on Electronic Health Record Incentive Program and Meaningful Use Regulations

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act authorized incentive payments to organizations and practitioners that promote the adoption and meaningful use of electronic health record (EHR) technology. AACAP has followed the succession of regulations as they have published and responded. In April, the Health and Human Services Administration released its proposed rule on Stage 2 criteria of the EHR Incentive Program for comment. AACAP, working with several committees as well as outside organizations such as the AMA, APA, and others responded to some of the serious concerns that exist as the program tries to move too quickly from Stage 1 to Stage 2 of the program when penalties start to apply. Some of our concerns with the regulation include: ensuring there are more opt-out options or exclusion criteria, and enough relevant meaningful use criteria that child and adolescent psychiatrists can participate successfully. To read AACAP comments click here.

AACAP also formed the Task Force on Health Information Technology tasked with developing tools including a web site to help members understand the incentive programs but also the benefits of EHRs.

State Advocacy Update

The 2012 legislative sessions have wrapped up in most states, with 14 states and the District of Columbia still currently in session. AACAP actively tracks state legislation related to child psychiatry and children’s mental health across the country. To see what’s happening in your state, click here and select your state on the map. Read on to learn about recent legislative activity and advocacy efforts.

Scope of Practice

New Jersey
In early May, the New Jersey Assembly Committee on Regulated Professions considered A 2419, to allow prescriptive authority to psychologists. Anna Vander Schraff, M.D. testified on behalf of the New Jersey Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, stressing collaborative care with primary care physicians as an alternative solution to increase access to mental health treatment. AACAP continues to coordinate with the New Jersey Council on advocacy efforts to oppose the legislation. The Regulated Professions Committee will meet again on June 7th.

Illinois
In March, the Illinois Senate Public Health Committee passed SB 3329, which would grant psychologists prescription privileges. However, the bill was not brought to a full
vote in the Senate before the legislature adjourned on May 31st.

Legislation to allow psychologists to prescribe medication was introduced in several states around the country during the 2012 legislative sessions. However, we don’t expect any bills to make significant progress this year. Click here to learn more about the pending legislation.

**Virginia Budget Includes New Funding for Children’s Mental Health**

The Virginia legislature recently passed the state budget for the biennium, including a total of $3.3 million in new funding for child psychiatry and children’s crisis response services for FY13 and FY14. Additionally, the budget provides $250,000 for a feasibility study for a new Virginia Treatment Center for Children, which provides inpatient and outpatient services to children with mental illness.

**AACAP Advocacy in Action: Oregon Council Successfully Opposes Mandated Equal Pay for Nurses and Physicians**

The Oregon Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry led the charge during the 2012 session to successfully oppose HB 401, which would have mandated health insurers to reimburse nurse practitioners the same amount as they do physicians for the same service. The legislation passed the House Health Committee earlier this year, but ultimately died in the Rules Committee due in part to advocacy efforts by Mike Franz, M.D. and Oregon Council members. Similar legislation is expected to be introduced again next year. If passed, it would have significant consequences for the physician workforce, providing a disincentive for individuals to complete medical training.

**AACAP Launches New Advocacy Website!**

We are happy to announce the newly redesigned advocacy section of AACAP’s website! On the new site, you can:

- Learn about AACAP’s federal and state initiatives;
- Download advocacy resources, organized by topic;
- Listen to advocacy webinars;
- Contact your federal legislators;
- Track legislation in your state, and more!

We will continue to update content on the website, so be sure to check back regularly for new resources!

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