

President's Message – October 1, 2018

Stephen Meister, MD, MHSA, FAAP

The State of Maine Governorship, two Federal Representatives, one Federal Senator and all of our State Representative and Senate positions are in play this November.

We, the Maine Chapter of the AAP know that it is important to step up and support advocacy for kids. So, what are we doing to make a difference?

We believe that advocacy matters and have worked hard on key initiatives on behalf of our members and Maine Children and Families. We are working with...

- Senator Collins to protect Medicaid and supporting Title X funding for family planning and Planned Parenthood.
- The Maine legislature and the Maine CDC to develop a rational screening and education program to address CMV during pregnancy.
- Our members and family physicians to make Maine one of the leaders in the nation in screening for and early identification of and intervention for developmental delay and autism.
- Our members and other key partners to educate legislators about the threat edible marijuana could pose to children in our state and ensuring adoption of rules limiting edibles.
- Partners such as the Developmental Disabilities Council and Maine Quality Counts to attract grant funds from the national AAP and others to improve ADHD care for children in our state, just as we partnered in the past to improve and standardize care for babies exposed to narcotics in utero.
- MidCoast Hospital and community agencies with our Chapter Vice President, Deb Hagler's heroic efforts to bring SBIRT training to Maine to help address the opioid epidemic where it starts: in adolescence.
- The Maine Medical Association - as advocacy matters most when legislators put forward bills that potentially cause more harm than good - and we often have limited time to put together testimony to effectively educate the legislative committee on the dangers of the bill
- Partners such as the Maine Chapter of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Maine Children's Alliance, Maine Children's Trust, Maine Parent Federation, Maine Suicide Prevention Council and the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council - and recently, we partnered with the Maine Coalition for Children and Adolescent Mental Health and convinced the current administration to conduct a statewide assessment of children's mental health programs and services.
- The Maine CDC to apply for a federal grant to improve care for women with post-partum depression and attachment problems with their infants.
- The Maine Children's Alliance to testify before the State Legislative Education Committee about a bill that would gut child development services for children 3 to 5 without any replacement.
- Physicians for Social Responsibility to co-sponsor Dr. Philip Landrigan to speak at UNE in Portland October 19th at 5:30 pm on environmental toxins and their effect on children - especially important since the EPA put Dr. Ruth Etzel, the head of its Office of Children's Health Protection and a pediatrician and epidemiologist, on administrative leave.

Many of you, our members, are volunteering your time to serve on Chapter committees to move forward our mission of providing leadership in promoting excellence in health care for children and adolescents. We have an active Advocacy Committee, chaired by Laura Blaisdell, which will propel our efforts forward.

To continue to be the leading authority, advocate and voice for the health of Maine's children and the profession of pediatrics we need your help. We are asking you to contribute to our "Forever Fund." Started by past Chapter President Janice Pelletier, this fund forms the core for our financial future. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to our chapter so we can continue to do this important work. To donate, please visit our website.

Thank you!!

All the best,

Steve