

Minnesota Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MINNESOTA

American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®

MNAAP 2022 Legislative & Advocacy Priorities

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP) is a professional association of pediatricians and pediatricians-in-training. Our mission is to advocate on behalf of our patients: Minnesota's newborns, children, and adolescents.

Expand and Increase Funding for Early Childhood Initiatives

MNAAP will strongly advocate to increase funding for early childhood initiatives that enhance the health, education, care and opportunity of our youngest Minnesotans. Access to early childhood education correlates to long-term educational attainment as well as improvements in youth well-being. The importance of these and other early childhood supports on a child's brain development and life trajectory cannot be overstated.

Additionally, supporting caregivers with the time, skills and resources to connect with and educate children in the early years yields a profound impact on youth and human development. Investments in areas such as parent and family education, early childhood healthcare and home visiting, as well as paid family leave, ensure strong connections and empower these first teachers with knowledge, skills and resources.

Advance Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health

Rising rates of childhood and youth mental illness have heightened awareness of the need for efforts that promote mental health and well-being and broaden access to mental health services and management. A 2019 Minnesota Student Survey showed that more Minnesota students report having long-term mental health, behavioral, or emotional problems than ever. Those numbers have swelled since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Early identification, intervention and services to address this urgent need amongst our pediatric population of Minnesota are critically important.

MNAAP supports promoting and advancing mental health and behavioral healthcare with increased access to treatments and services as well as providing education, resources for providers and organizations delivering care, while maintaining support for children, adolescents and their families.

Increase Vaccination Rates Against Infectious Diseases

Vaccines have long been one of the most effective treatments against the spread of childhood diseases like polio, measles and chicken pox and more recently have been found to be very effective against COVID-19 infections. Minnesota is one of about 15 states that allow parents to exempt their children from public school immunization requirements based on personal beliefs: *MNAAP recommends that the state's personal belief vaccination exemption should be repealed so more children can be protected from the spread of infectious disease.*

Additionally, MNAAP supports legislative efforts to provide funding for outreach and education of communities that have low vaccination rates.

Protect Children and Youth from Firearm Violence

In Minnesota, there were over 450 firearm-related deaths in 2019, with more than 75 percent of these deaths being suicides. Specifically, firearms are the leading method of suicide for adolescents aged 15 to 19: *MNAAP supports expanding criminal background checks to all firearm transfers and sales, enacting "red flag" laws to protect those who may be a danger to themselves or others, authorizing the use of firearm ownership data for public health research or epidemiologic investigation, strengthening existing safe storage laws, and awareness efforts of the role that firearms play in suicides, especially in youth and adolescents.*