Fall is upon us and that means we have just wrapped up the best time of the year. Summer in Minnesota is my favorite season and July 4th is always a highlight. I was thinking about how much I enjoy fireworks and thinking about how they are so representative of what we do in pediatrics.

Fireworks often originate on some mysterious barge out on a darkened lake, streaking upward to explode into a dazzling display of twinkling lights. Sometimes they even form shapes or smiley faces. Who could imagine something could undergo such an amazing transformation? Pediatricians can.

Pediatricians handle special cargo all the time. Some of our “packages” can go off without warning, melting down into a full-blown tantrum right before our eyes. Pediatricians know we need to do our work with special care.

Pediatrics is the long game. Each visit builds on the relationship between child and pediatrician so that from time-to-time, a previously sickly toddler or a child who has survived cancer treatment comes in for a camp physical or pre-college form completion and you think to yourself, “that is amazing.” Because like a good firework display, it is.

Eileen Crespo, MD, FAAP, began her two-year term as MNAAP president in July 2022. Dr. Crespo practices at Hennepin Healthcare and is the vice president of medical services at Delta Dental.
November Elections Will Bring Entirely New Government
Chad Fahning, MNAAP Lobbyist

As the leaves turn and we wave goodbye to summer, we also bid adieu to the likelihood of a special session in Minnesota. Labor Day typically marks the time when legislators are fully out of legislating mode and fully emerged in their door-knocking, fundraising, and other campaign events.

With that, the record-setting $9.3 billion budget surplus will likely sit idle until the 93rd Minnesota Legislature gavels in on Jan. 3. The 93rd legislature will look much different than the 92nd. With redistricting this past spring – an event that occurs following the census to reflect population shifts – many legislators retired after finding themselves in a politically unfriendly district or being paired in the same district with another member. Estimates expect over one-third of the Minnesota Legislature not to return again in 2023. With that comes immense loss of legislative and policy expertise, but also great opportunity and hope for movement on important issues in the future.

Very few of MNAAP’s legislative policy priorities passed this past session. In fact, very few bills were passed entirely. MNAAP was happy to see a bipartisan mental health package pass into law, dedicating nearly $100 million to mental health needs, including school and child mental health grants. However, the relative inaction on many major policy priorities was frustrating to many.

Looking ahead to the upcoming legislative session, the state constitution requires a state budget be finalized before the new fiscal year in July. Since the legislature will need to pass a state budget, the prospect of expanded state funding for early childhood initiatives will certainly be on the table. The future of other major MNAAP priority items, such as commonsense firearm reform, legislation to increase childhood vaccination rates, and reproductive healthcare policy, will largely depend on the outcome of the upcoming election.

On Tuesday, Nov. 8, Minnesotans will elect an entirely new government in the state. That is, all 201 state legislators and the five constitutional officers (governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, and state auditor) will be up for election.

Early voting began in Minnesota on Friday, Sept. 23 and goes through Monday, Nov. 7, including for those interested in voting-by-mail. More information can be found on the secretary of state’s website at www.sos.state.mn.us/elections/voting/.
MNAAP Work Group Updates

**Anti-Racism & Disparities**
Co-Chairs: Valeria Cristiani, MD, FAAP; Kate Sadak, MD, FAAP
Focuses on: Dismantling disparities and systemic barriers by educating providers of their role, centering the voices of those most affected, and engaging in respectful community partnerships.
Currently working on: Organizing an in-person meeting this winter
Next Meeting: Dec. 12; 12:15 - 1 p.m. via Zoom

**Behavioral Health**
Co-Chairs: Ria Bardhan, MBBS, FAAP; Gretchen Karstens, MD, FAAP
Focuses on: The urgent need for improved mental health care options and greater access to mental health services in a variety of settings that meet the patient where they are to remove barriers to care.
Currently working on: Grant projects to improve mental health screening and referral for LGBTQI+ and BIPOC pediatric patients.

**Early Childhood**
Co-Chairs: Nathan Chomilo, MD, FAAP; Roger Sheldon, MD, FAAP; Krishnan Subrahmanian, MD, FAAP
Focuses on: Advocacy for education and care in the early, formative years of a child’s life, which have a measurable impact on their future.
Currently working on: Rolling out a series of lunch-hour seminars focused on early childhood development screening, education, and care topics.
Next meeting: Nov. 28; 12:15-1 p.m. via Zoom

**Immunizations**
Co-Chairs: Garrett Jones, MD, FAAP; and Dawn Martin, MD, MPH, FAAP
Focuses on: Improving statewide vaccination rates among Minnesota’s child and teens, and advocating for vaccination laws that assure our children have a healthy future.
Next meeting: Thursday, Oct. 6; 12:15 - 1 p.m. via Zoom

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**MNAAP Annual Legislative Policy Roundtable**

**ADD YOUR VOICE TO THE CONVERSATION.**

Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022 6:30-8 p.m.

The roundtable is the perfect opportunity to share your perspective on the issues that the MNAAP should focus on at the Capitol during the upcoming legislative session.

Hosted via Zoom.
More details to come in the weekly All Member Email.

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**Partnership with Reach Out and Read MN Yields Anti-Racism Training Pilot Program**

A subgroup of the chapter’s Anti-Racism & Disparities work group has successfully launched their first project: a partnership with Reach Out and Read Minnesota to train clinicians to work with parents on how to raise race-conscious children.

The program, currently in the pilot phase at several clinics throughout Minnesota, was the result of the group’s goal to work with existing community organizations to reach parents and families with anti-racism education efforts.

The program includes a training module for clinicians and two specially selected books depicting diverse children and families. The books are given out as part of the Reach Out and Read portion of the 6 month and 3-4 year visits. Clinicians have a brief discussion with families about raising race-conscious children, and provide a bookmark to help facilitate discussions at home.
The Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP), together with Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare, the Chloe Barnes Advisory Council on Rare Diseases and the Minnesota Department of Health, hosted a roundtable event to discuss barriers and potential solutions in transitioning medically complex pediatric patients to adult care.

Close to 500 people from across the country and even other countries registered to be in the virtual audience for the event and close to 250 persons eventually “attended.” They were joined by six expert panelists and two moderators. The panelists included: Dr. Wendy Allen-Rhoades (Mayo Clinic); Dr. Nate Chomilo (Park Nicollet and the State of Minnesota Medicaid and MinnesotaCare Programs); Dr. Kurt Elling-Ballard (Allina Health); Pat Lang (PACER Center); Dr. Nancy Mendelsohn (Optum Frontiers Therapies at United Health Group); and Dr. Dave Tleska (CentriaCare Healthcare). The roundtable was moderated by Dr. Tori Bahr (Gillette) and Dr. Sheldon Berkowitz (Children’s Minnesota and MNAAP).

Among the concluding statements made by the panelists were figuring out how to use technology to help with transitions (e.g. medical record transfers), partnering with other organizations to do transition well, making the right decision the easy decision, learning from other organizations and states that have had successes with transitioning, creating a robust clinician registry for clinicians willing to care for these patients and figuring out to include education on this topic with ongoing graduate medical education.

Next steps will include making an audio recording of the event available to the public, developing a summary document of the event, convening the panelists again to discuss their reflections on the event and possible future direction for our attention and putting together a list of resources on this topic: currently posted at bit.ly/ComplexCareResources. If you want to learn more, please contact me at sberkowitz12@gmail.com.

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP) and its sister organization, the Minnesota Academy of Pediatrics Foundation (MAPF) administer and participate in several projects to address a wide variety of topics that affect child and teen development, health, safety, and wellbeing. These projects offer MNAAP and MAPF the opportunity to meaningfully direct funding and support to partner organizations doing important work for Minnesota’s young people. The mission of the MAPF is to protect and improve the health of all Minnesota children and teens. By partnering with pediatricians, state officials, and national and community-based organizations, the MAPF has developed many model programs that address key health or care delivery issues that have been shared both nationally and internationally. Grant projects for 2022 are listed below.

### AAP Healthy People 2030

This project will focus on BIPOC and LGBTQI+ adolescents who experience significant barriers to accessing culturally and content-appropriate mental health screening and treatment options. Particularly at the intersections of these two target populations, LGBTQI+ youth of color and indigenous youth have extremely limited, and often nonexistent, resources to maintain or improve their mental health, especially in rural Minnesota and even more acutely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will build on a past collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) to increase adolescent depression screening and speed up access to mental health treatment services. Additionally, MAPF will oversee the development of the statewide/regional MOC4.

### AAP Food Insecurity

This grant aims to close the loop between families and the Minnesota Women, Infant, and Children (MN WIC) program through the touchpoint of routine clinic visits. The project will examine how creating EMR referrals to the WIC program and shared information can promote WIC enrollment and encourage sustained participation.

### Pediatric Mental Health Access Program

This grant, funded by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), partners MNAAP with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to establish a pediatric mental health consult program, deliver evidence-based trainings and technical assistance on mental and behavioral health for PCPs, coordinate centralized data resource directories, and implement an advisory, collaborative leadership structure.

The Pediatric Mental Health Access Program (PMHAP) will examine how creating EMR referrals to the WIC program and shared information can promote WIC enrollment and encourage sustained participation. The grant aims to address the mental health needs of children and adolescents in Minnesota through a collaborative approach that includes provider education, resource development, and community engagement. The program will focus on improving access to mental health services, particularly for underserved populations. By implementing evidence-based practices, the grant will work to enhance the capacity of healthcare providers to deliver effective mental health care to young people in Minnesota, ensuring that they receive the support they need to thrive.

### AAP Mental Health, Food insecurity, Infection Control

This grant aims to close the loop between families and the Minnesota Women, Infant, and Children (MN WIC) program through the touchpoint of routine clinic visits. The project will examine how creating EMR referrals to the WIC program and shared information can promote WIC enrollment and encourage sustained participation.

### AAP Infection Control Training

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Project Firstline provides innovative and accessible infection control education for all frontline healthcare workers – so they can protect their patients, their coworkers and themselves from infectious disease threats in health care.

MNAAP serves as one of 75 healthcare, academic, and public health partners in the Project Firstline collaborative to reach a wide range of healthcare audiences and settings across the country.

Project Firstline offers educational resources in a variety of formats to meet the diverse learning needs and preferences of the healthcare workforce.
Dr. Bardhan and Karstens were honored for their work with the MNAAP chapter.

More member news:

Nathan Chomilo, MD, FAAP, authored the piece “Community health centers are the backbone of our healthcare safety net” which was published in the Minnesota Spokesman Recorder.

Sarah Kinsella, MD, CAQ, FAAP, co-authored an AAP Voices Blog titled, “How Can we Support the Mental Health of Young Athletes.”

Gigi Chawla, MD, MHA, FAAP, spoke with WCCO-TV about the ongoing formula shortage affecting families, including information about formula imported to the U.S. from other countries. Dr. Chawla also spoke to WCCO-TV for the story, “Pediatrician Raises Concerns over Legalized THC Edibles, Drinks.”

Dr. Singh was interviewed on PBS NewsHour for the segment, “What parents need to know about newly approved COVID vaccines for children under age 5.”

Minnesota Reformer recently featured a Q&A article with Nathan Chomilo, MD, FAAP, about his work as the medical director of Minnesota Medicaid and his efforts to address systemic racism and health disparities in the state.

Kelly Bergmann, DO, MS, FAAP, and colleagues and Children’s Minnesota, were published in JAMA Open Network for their research letter, “Analysis of COVID-19–Related Croup and SARS-CoV-2 Variant Predominance in the US.” A cross-sectional study conducted by the group found the proportion of children with COVID-19-related group increased during the Omicron surge. The findings expanded on recent, single-center studies that found an association between COVID-19 and croup.

Hannah Lichtsinn, MD, FAAP, authored a Readers Write submission published in the Star Tribune. In the submission, Dr. Lichtsinn urged for expanded access to abortion care in Minnesota and encouraged health systems to normalize the practice of abortion care in their clinics.

Do you have something noteworthy to share with chapter members about yourself, your clinic, or your colleagues? Send the information to MNAAP Communications Manager Bethany Venable at venable@mnaap.org.
Chapter Honors Achievement and Dedication with Annual Awards

Each year, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics honors chapter members and individuals in the community for their dedication to the health and wellbeing of Minnesota’s children and adolescents with the Distinguished Service Award and the Eric Dick Child Advocacy Award. The Distinguished Service Award is presented to a pediatrician for dedicating their life to improving care for children in Minnesota. The newly named Eric Dick Child Advocacy award honors MNAAP’s late lobbyist and is presented to a person or organization from the community who goes above and beyond in their everyday routine to advocate for children, embodying the importance of advocacy that Eric strove to instill in our chapter.

Chapter President Eileen Crespo, MD, FAAP, announced the 2022 award recipients at the annual meeting on Sept. 15. We applaud these individuals for their commitment to advocacy and advancement on behalf of Minnesota’s youngest residents.

2022 Distinguished Service Award

Lori DeFrance, MD, FAAP, dedicated more than a decade to the MNAAP Board of Directors, serving from 2010 to 2022, as the chapter president from 2018 to 2020, and as the foundation board president from 2020 to 2022. Recently retired, Dr. DeFrance previously practiced medicine with Essenta Health in Duluth, and was a persistent voice which reminded the chapter to consider all of Minnesota’s children and teens in every part of the state. Her nominators recalled her “centering presence” which connected board members and allowed them to get to know one another outside of their roles as physicians. Others called her a calming, forward-thinking and a passionate pediatrician. Upon receiving her award at the chapter meeting, Dr. DeFrance said, “Pediatricians like you and me lay the foundation for our communities doing better by persistently and passionately advocating for the health and safety of children, adolescents and families. And this work continues through pandemics, gun violence, health care pressures and so on. So our work is needed now more than ever and I am so proud of you all.”

2022 Eric Dick Child Advocacy Award

Kris Ehresmann, RN, MPH, is the former director of the Infectious Disease, Epidemiology, Prevention and Control Division at the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). MNAAP President Eileen Crespo, MD, FAAP, called Ms. Ehresmann “fearless in her communication” during the early months and years of the COVID-19 pandemic. “Kris was the voice of calm and science. She interpreted the data and gave us a scientific basis for all the decisions being made,” said Dr. Crespo. “It’s really an honor to be recognized by the MNAAP.” Ms. Ehresmann said in her remarks. “I worked with Eric a lot in his role…” To receive an award that honors Eric is especially meaningful to me.” She is recently retired from her role at MDH and is currently teaching epidemiology and public health at St. Olaf College.

Rep. Dave Pinto (DFL-64B) is the chair for the Minnesota House Committee on Early Childhood Finance and Policy and has been a long-standing supporter of early childhood education and care. “He is a passionate advocate for the youngest Minnesotans,” wrote one nominator, “and seems to do everything with their future in mind.” When Rep. Pinto received his award, he reflected that his involvement in early childhood work came when he asked himself, “Where can I really make a difference?” He encouraged chapter members to “please lean in. We need you, the kids of Minnesota need you…having your elected officials hear from you, know about the work that you’re doing and understand the kind of things they need to know to make good decisions for kids and for all of us, that is so important to do.”

WHAT IS THE MNAAP JEDI FUND?

In early 2022, the MNAAP Board of Directors unanimously approved the creation of the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Fund. This measure aligns the chapter’s finances with its goals to promote health equity for all of Minnesota’s children, youth, and families.

A COMMITMENT

The chapter’s budget includes $5,000 allocated for each of three years for justice, equity, diversity and inclusion work within the chapter and beyond.

A REVIEW

The chapter will hire an external consultant to look critically at the chapter’s history, operations, and initiatives and make recommendations for change.

AN AMPLIFIER

Community partners and organizations working in the equity, diversity and inclusion sphere deserve support. The JEDI fund allows MNAAP to help increase the reach of their efforts.
The Eric Dick Memorial Advocacy Scholarship will be awarded annually to one or more residents or medical students to engage in legislative advocacy projects aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of children in Minnesota – particularly those focused on eliminating health disparities.

The scholarship is named after MNAAP’s longtime lobbyist, Eric Dick, who passed away in January 2021. Eric worked tirelessly to advocate on behalf of Minnesota’s children and teens, and was passionate about helping medical students and early career physicians learn the ropes of legislative advocacy. With a generous 10-year financial commitment from one of our board members to seed the scholarship fund, we invite you to join us in honoring Eric’s memory with a contribution of your own.

You can do so by clicking the donate button on the Foundation’s webpage at mnaap.org/mapf or by mailing a check, made payable to the Minnesota Academy of Pediatrics Foundation, to the address below. Please include “Eric Dick Memorial Advocacy Scholarship” in the memo line.

Minnesota Academy of Pediatrics Foundation
c/o Jeff Bauer, Executive Director
1609 County Road 42 W. #305
Burnsville, MN 55306

Scholarship Supports Legislative Advocacy Projects for Residents, Medical Students

As of mid-September, COVID-19 vaccination rates in Minnesota’s children and teens were lagging behind their adult counterparts, particularly in the 6-months to 4 years, and 5-years to 11-years-old age categories.

In addition to these low COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates, routine child and teen immunization rates are below pre-pandemic numbers. This puts more Minnesota youth at risk for vaccine-preventable disease, particularly as school gets underway.

MNAAP offers these social media images for members to use as part of an ongoing social media effort to encourage caregivers and families to vaccinate their child or teen against COVID-19. These graphics were developed as part of a grant from the American Academy of Pediatrics to increase positive social media messaging about COVID-19 vaccination. Some graphics speak directly about COVID-19 vaccination, while others are more general in the messaging about the importance of immunizations.

To use the toolkit, simply choose a message to copy and paste to your social media account and pair one of the associated images, either a photo or cartoon. Messages are appropriate for either Facebook or Twitter, and the images below are sized for either Facebook or Twitter. To copy an image, right click on the image and save the image to your device.

Go directly to the COVID-19 toolkit page by scanning the QR code below with your phone’s camera, or visit www.mnaap.org/covid-19-vaccination-social-media-toolkit/.
Firstborn U.S. children were more likely to be fully up to date on their childhood vaccines than non-firstborn children, according to an analysis of a national dataset to be published in the October 2022 Pediatrics. The research brief, “Birth Order and Up-To-Date Vaccination Status,” compared vaccination up-to-date status between firstborn and non-firstborn children using the 2016-2019 National Immunization Survey-Child dataset. Researchers reviewed data on 24,582 firstborn and 37,761 non-firstborn children to check if they received vaccines that are recommended before age 19 months. After adjusting for sociodemographic variables, firstborn children were significantly more likely to be up to date for all eight individual vaccines and all four vaccine series examined. When the number of children under age 18 in the household was introduced as a control, the results were attenuated, suggesting that family size may partially, but not fully, explain these results, according to the study. The authors suggest that future research is conducted to explain this trend.

Firstborn Children More Likely to Be Up to Date on Vaccinations Than Non-Firstborn Children

News from AAP:

Pediatric Type 2 Diabetes: Not Your Grandfather’s Diabetes

“With a 95 percent increase in type 2 diabetes (T2DM) incidence in youth aged 10-19 years from 2001 to 2013, T2DM clearly is not just a disease of adulthood anymore,” writes Meg Bensignor, MD, FAAP. Dr. Bensignor is an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics and in the Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes at the University of Minnesota as well as a Core Faculty in the University of Minnesota Center for Pediatric Obesity Medicine.

Read more at: mnaap.org/pediatric-type-2-diabetes-not-your-grandfathers-diabetes/

Submit your article ideas to Bethany Venable at venable@mnaap.org.

Approved articles will be posted to MNAAP.org, featured in the weekly All Member Email and be highlighted in the quarterly newsletter.

With more specialties than any children’s health system in the Midwest, the experts at Children’s Minnesota can help you with just about anything.

TOGETHER, LET’S RAISE ‘EM UP

24/7 ACCESS TO PEDIATRIC EXPERTS: 866-755-2121

Wanted: Presenters for the 2023 Twin Cities Pediatrics Update

Are you a dynamic presenter with a passion for sharing important information about a hot topic in pediatrics? Have you recently seen a great presentation you think more pediatricians should view?

Planning is underway for the 2023 Twin Cities Pediatrics Update, hosted by Children’s Minnesota, the University of Minnesota Department of Pediatrics and MNAAP. Send us your presentation and presenter suggestions so we can collaborate to bring you an incredible educational experience with the 2023 conference.

Email Bethany Venable at venable@mnaap.org.
Stay Connected!

If you are a member, you should be receiving:

- Weekly All Member Email Newsletters
- Bi-weekly legislative updates during the legislative session
- Quarterly newsletters from the chapter

Thank you to our 2022-2023 sponsors

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is incorporated in the state of Minnesota.