

## Minnesota Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



### **MNAAP 2023 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 for the health of every child and adolescent in Minnesota.

#### **Address Social Drivers of Health**

Child and adolescent health is heavily influenced by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, play, and age. These social drivers of health not only drive health outcomes, but contribute to the significant health inequities experienced by many Minnesotans. MNAAP supports efforts to address social drivers of health that include, but are not limited to, housing and food insecurity, access to quality education, employment and social support systems, and inequities based on race, gender, or sexual orientation.

#### **Support Funding for Early Childhood Initiatives**

MNAAP will advocate to increase funding for early childhood initiatives that enhance the health, education, care, and opportunity for our youngest Minnesotans. Access to early childhood education correlates to long-term educational attainment and improvements in youth well-being. This requires that caregivers are equipped with the time, skills, and resources to educate and connect with children in their early years. Investments in areas such as parent and family education, early childhood healthcare and home visiting, and paid family leave, help ensure strong connections and yield a profound impact on youth development.

#### **Promote Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health**

MNAAP supports the advancement and promotion of mental and behavioral healthcare via increased access to treatments and services for the state's youth. Providing early identification, intervention, and other mental and behavioral health services to children, adolescents, and their families will continue to be a top priority for MNAAP so long as rates of childhood and youth mental illness continue to rise in Minnesota.

#### **Increase Vaccination Rates Against Infectious Diseases**

Vaccinations are effective against the spread of childhood diseases. Minnesota currently allows parents to exempt their children from public school immunization requirements based on "conscientiously held beliefs." MNAAP remains committed to repealing this exemption so more children can be protected from the spread of infectious disease. MNAAP also supports legislative efforts to fund educational initiatives in Minnesota communities that have low vaccination rates.

#### **Protect Children and Youth from Firearm Violence**

Accidental firearm injury and homicide continues to be a major health concern for Minnesota's youth. Firearms are also the leading method of suicide for adolescents aged 15 to 19. MNAAP supports common sense firearm control measures including expanding criminal background checks for 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.