



Keeping Children and Adolescents a Top Priority for the Federal Government

Public Affairs Update

June 20, 2024

Champions for Children's Health

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Agenda

- Policy and political environment.
- Policy priorities and status.
- Broader advocacy work.
- Discussion and questions.

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Advocacy and Policy Foundation

The basics...

- Insert **children** into policy conversations so that their unique needs are addressed and not forgotten.
- Highlight the critical role that **children's hospitals** play for children and the need for additional support to meet their vital missions.



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Policy and Political Environment

- “Silly season” has begun.
- Congress has limited session days to do a lot of work.
 - Fund the government for FY25.
 - Must pass bills such as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
 - Privacy bills.
- Busy Lame Duck and potential for health care legislation.



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Policy Priorities

With an overall focus on hospital sustainability.

Pediatric Workforce

Recruit, retain, and bolster the pediatric physician and non-physician workforce.

Mental Health

Address current children's mental health challenges and work on long-term solutions to improve health at the broader community level.

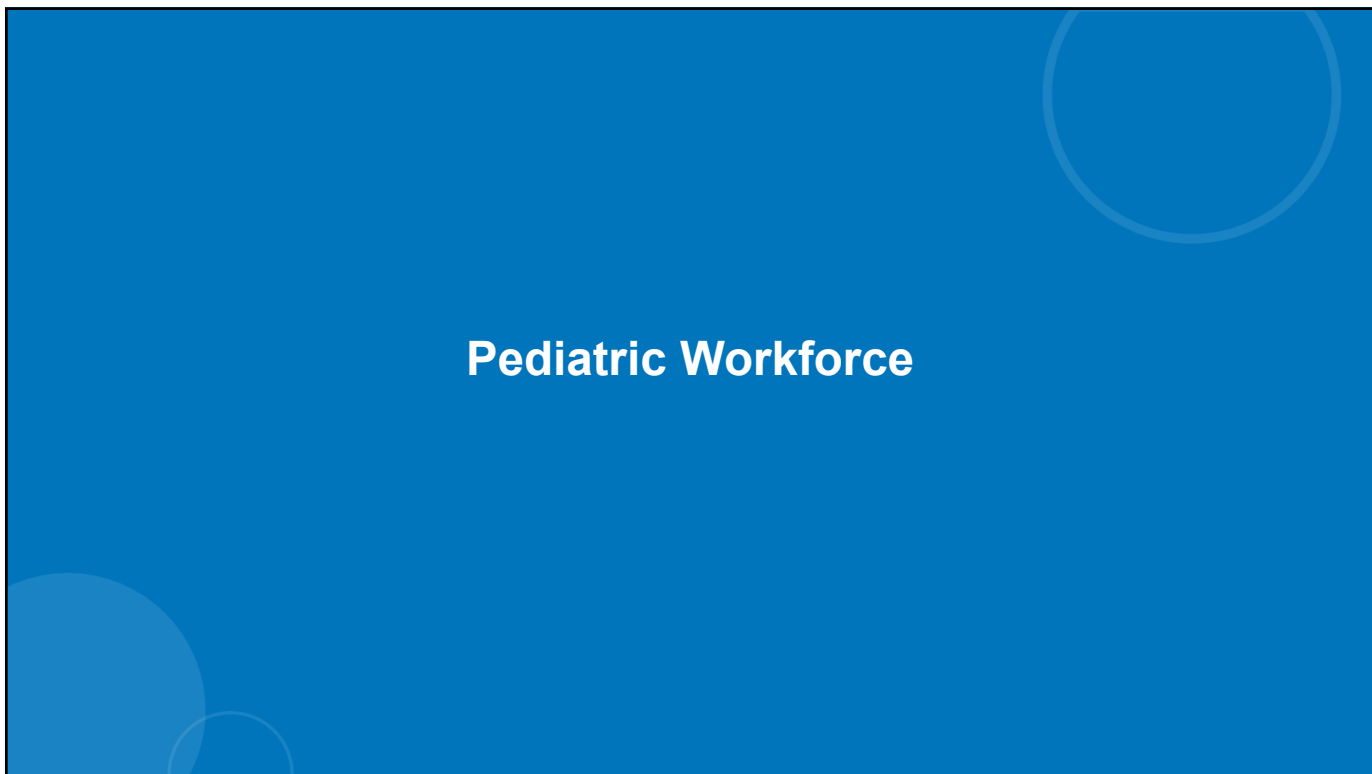
Medicaid

Protect Medicaid funding and advance policies to ensure pediatric patients get the care when they need it.

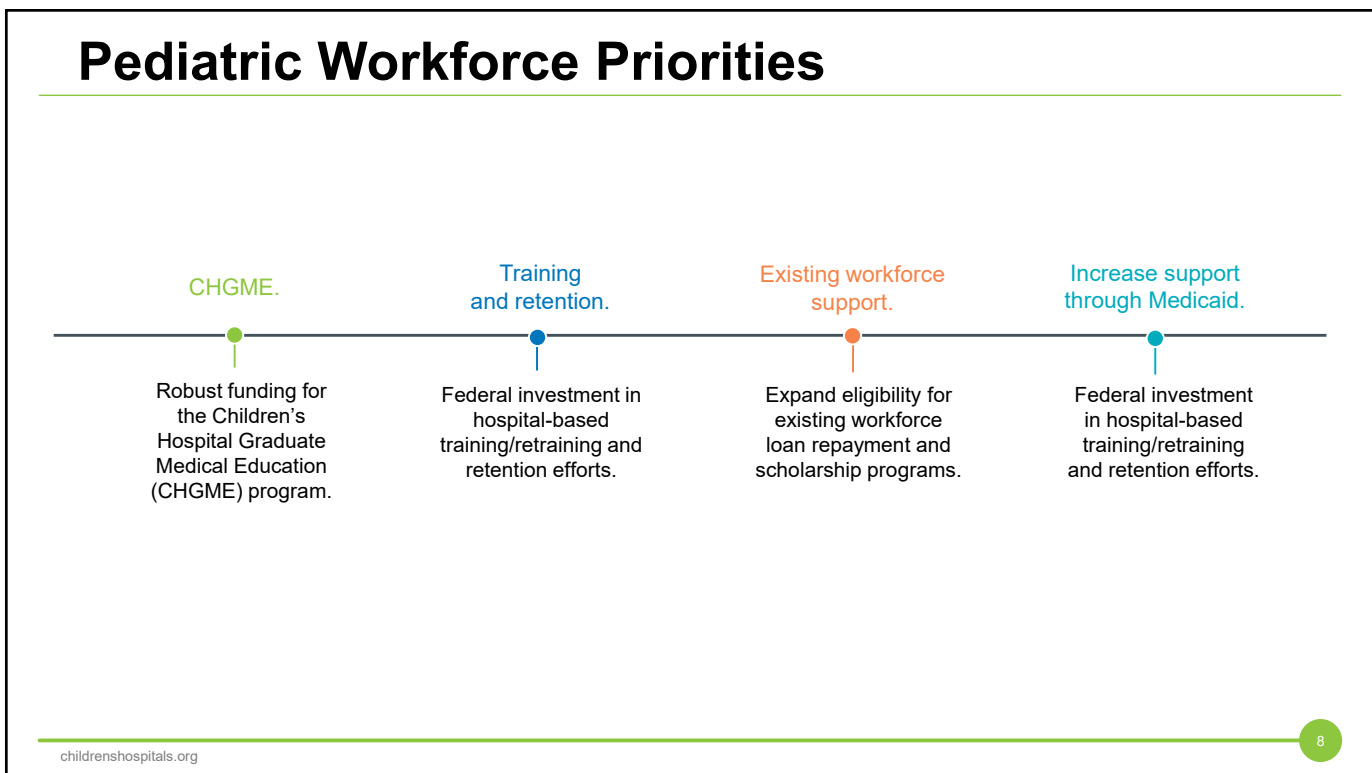
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CHGME Reauthorization Project with FTI Consulting

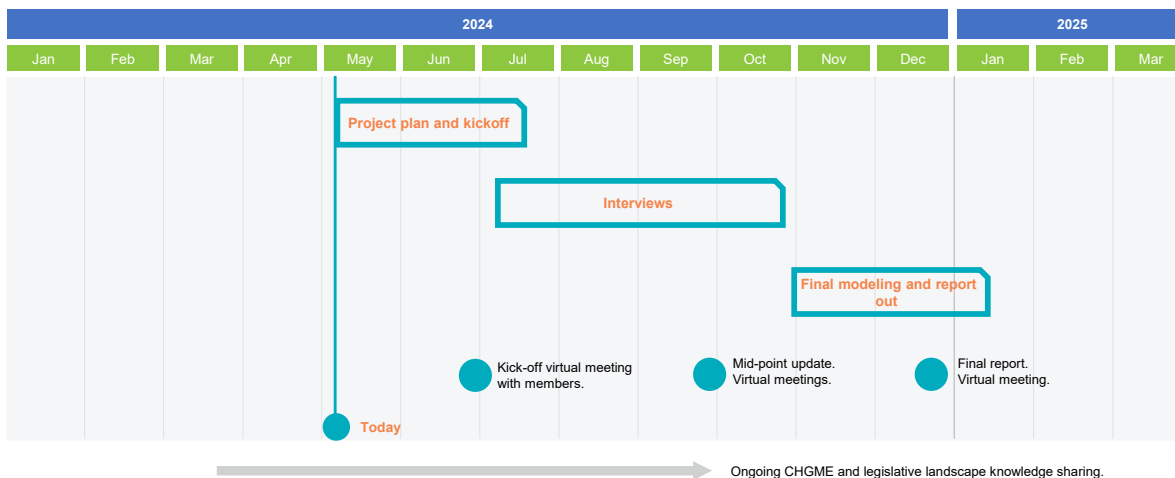
Goal:
Identify opportunities to strengthen the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program.

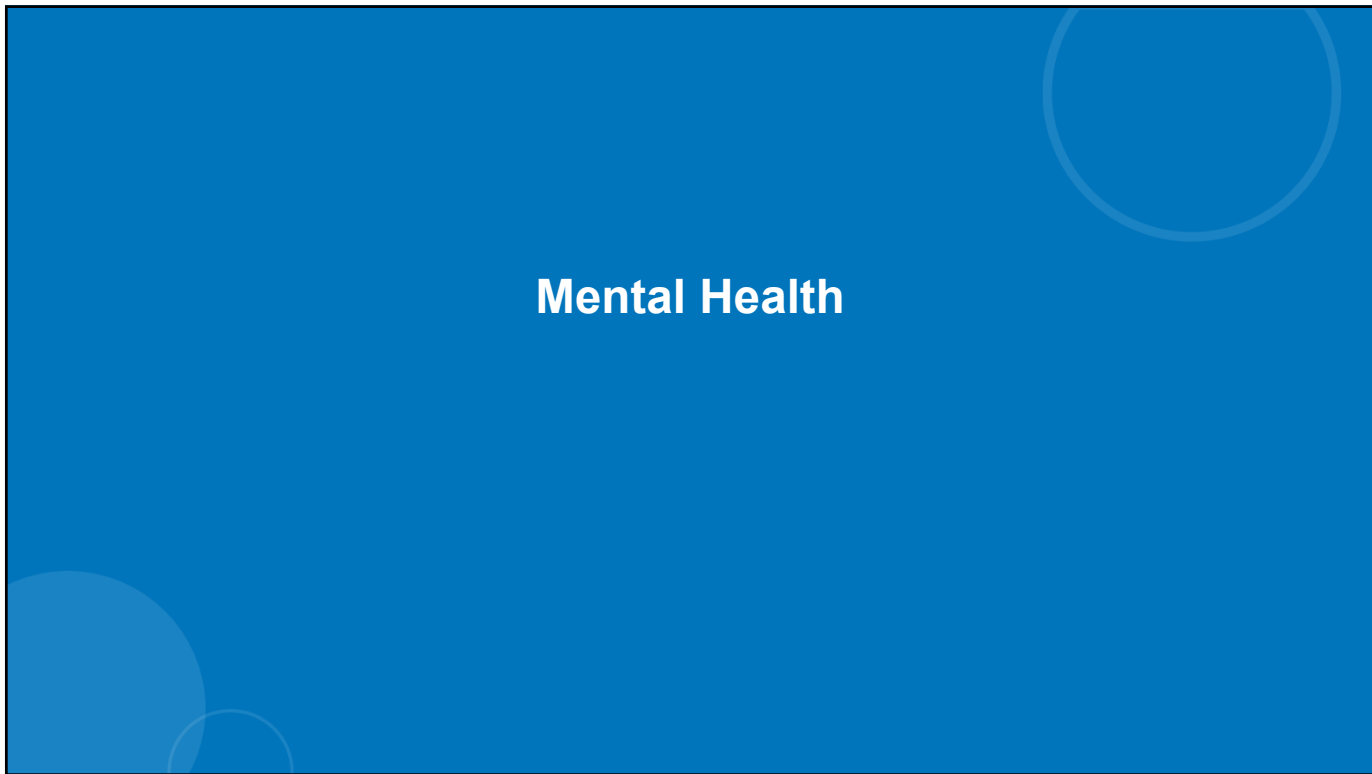
Objectives:

- Conduct independent interviews with 59 member hospitals that receive CHGME funding.
- Compile member priorities and program enhancement suggestions for CHGME.
- Model the potential implications (e.g., financial, operational, programmatic, strategic) of two or three CHGME program modification options for participating hospitals.
- Develop recommendations for CHA to leverage as part of its legislative and advocacy agenda regarding opportunities to optimize the future success of the CHGME program.

Project Timeline

The timeline below represents a nine-month engagement, inclusive of 59 completed interviews, and three to five virtual meetings.





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Children's Mental Health Strategy

- **Advance broad support for children's mental health.**
 - **H.R. 2412, Helping Kids Cope Act:** Address the unique challenges of the ongoing national emergency in children's mental health by targeting investment to support pediatric providers and services.
 - **H.R. 7808 EARLY Minds Act:** Allow states to use up to 5% of their Community Mental Health Block Grant (MHBG) funds for prevention and early intervention services with children and adults.
- **Explore Medicaid policies to better support children's mental health.**
 - Enacted additional data reporting under Medicaid and CHIP on mental health disaggregated by age.
 - Address same-day billing issues.
 - Identify bipartisan efforts to better support Medicaid pediatric behavioral workforce, such as a provider capacity demonstration.
- **Leverage opportunities within existing authority to address gaps in children's mental health.**
 - Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) oversight.
 - Existing programs that provide funding for the workforce.

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Medicaid

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Safeguarding the program and its funding:

- Fight against any Medicaid cuts.
- Defend supplemental payments – prevent DSH cuts – delayed until end of the year.
- Medicaid unwinding and impact on children.

Opportunities to improve the program:

- Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act.
- Outlining EPSDT gaps to inform CMS oversight.
- Opportunities to increase investments in mental health.
- Pushing positive policies through the administration – access/MMC rules, Medicare rules impact on Medicaid.
- Explore policies to better support high-cost therapies.

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Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act

The Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act would:



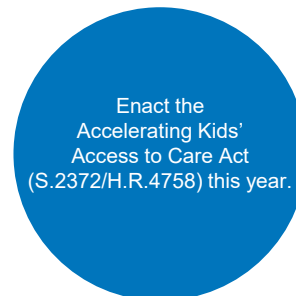
Create a new pathway for pediatric providers to enroll in multiple state Medicaid programs if certain requirements are met, including being in the lowest category for potential program integrity issues and enrolled in their home state's Medicaid program.



Focus only on provider screening and enrollment, and not on authorization of care by an out-of-state provider nor payment rates for such care, leaving both issues within the purview of state Medicaid agencies.



Improve children's timely access to essential health care and eliminate administrative burdens for providers and states and delays in care.



- Congressional Budget Office (CBO) score reduced from \$7B to \$218M over ten years.
- The bill is led by Senators Grassley, R-Iowa, and Bennet, D-Colo., and Representatives Trahan, D-Mass., and Miller-Meeke, R-Iowa, and a growing list of bipartisan supporters.

Ensuring Strong EPSDT Oversight

- EPSDT is Medicaid's comprehensive preventive health care and treatment program for all children under the age of 21.
- We successfully advocated for EPSDT oversight that was included in the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022**. This review needs to be conducted no later than June 2024, and then every five years after its initial review. Gaps need to be identified and addressed.

Recommending focus on the following children's hospital priority areas for CMS' review:

Behavioral health continuum.



Specialized services for children with complex conditions.



Rate of managed care prior authorization denials.



Access and timeliness of out-of-state care.



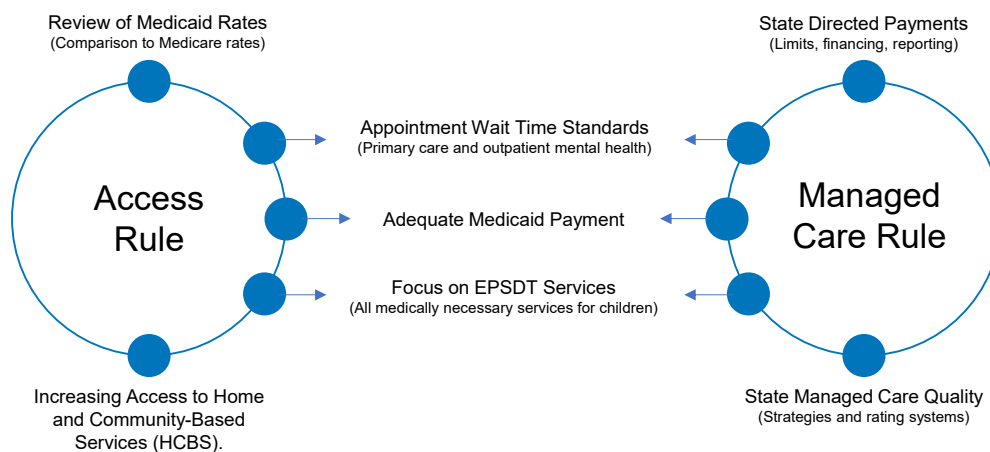
Role of payment in access to services.



Medicaid Rules – Access and Managed Care



- In April 2024, CMS released two significant final rules on **Medicaid access and managed care**.
- **CHA responded to both proposed rules**, highlighting key issues relevant for children's health and hospitals.



High-Cost Therapies (HCT)

- Engaging with CMS Innovation Center on access model focused on sickle cell.
 - Encourage your state to participate.
- Utilizing existing HCT workgroup for expertise and input – operational, financial, government relations (GR) leaders involved.
- Created a GR subgroup to produce potential federal policy proposals to ensure equitable support for HCT.
 - Focusing on HCT, Medicaid to start.
 - Reviewing existing federal and state policies to inform our work and discuss potential alignment with other stakeholders.
 - Provide a menu of options to discuss with federal policymakers by early next year.
 - Proposals will be vetted through CHA's governance process.
- If interested and want to stay connected with this work, please reach out to me or Terri Wilson.



Ensuring children's hospitals have the resources to care for children.

- AHA and AEH are proposing concepts of high need hospitals with a strong focus on Medicare metrics.
- Exploring options for children's hospitals inclusion in any conversations about highest need/safety net hospitals:
 - Workgroup convened to provide feedback on options for pediatric provider pathway.
 - Discussing project update and next steps with governance.
 - Considering options for pediatric pathway that include Medicaid levels, hospital diagnostic diversity index, CHGME, etc.

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Attacks on Hospitals

We need to tell the unique children's hospital story.

Site Neutral/ Price Transparency



- Legislation moving through Congress.
- CHA and hospital outreach to key members and staff.
- Coalition to Strengthen America's Health Care.
- New Families USA priorities.

340B



- Congressional interest in increased transparency, reporting requirements.
- 340B work group to provide strategic guidance to CHA.
- 340B Health ad campaign.

Non-Profit Hospital Status

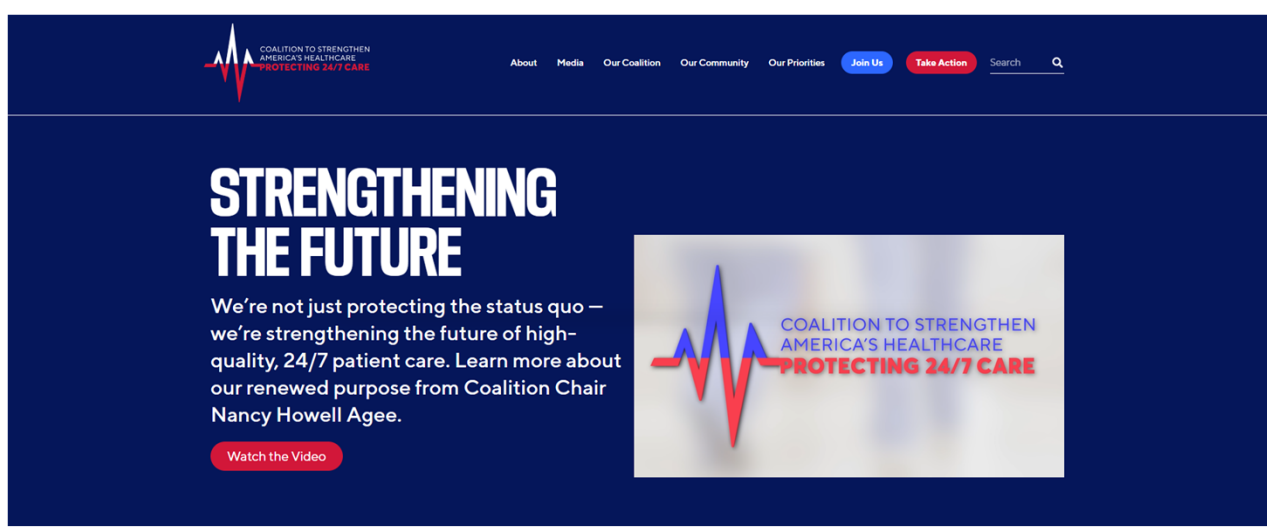


- Attacks by well-funded groups and concern raised in Congress.

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Coalition to Strengthen America's Health Care

Protecting 24/7 care.



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Rural Access Event



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Advocacy Resources

State of Children's Health Dashboard

MEDICAID IS VITAL TO KIDS

- 44% of Medicaid enrollees are children.
- 35 Million children are enrolled in Medicaid in the U.S. every year.
- > 6 Million children with special health care needs rely on Medicaid and CHIP.
- Nearly 4 Million children with Medicaid rely on children's hospitals.

Childhood Development Matters: While mental and behavioral health conditions can and do occur at any age, symptoms and conditions often begin in childhood. By investing in prevention and treatment, children will grow up healthier and develop the skills they need to go on to succeed and fulfilling lives.

Youth Mental Health Crisis: America is experiencing a crisis in the mental health of children and adolescents, which began long before the pandemic, and worsened as a result of the traumatic stress and uncertainty experienced by families. Children's hospitals are seeing the impact on youth every day, through a sharp rise in the number of emergency department (ED) and inpatient visits for suicidal thoughts or self-harm, with rates never seen before.

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FOCUSING ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

- 1 in 5 children and adolescents experience a mental health condition in a given year.
- 50% of mental disorders begin by age 14.
- 14% of suicides are youth and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24, making it the second leading cause of death.
- 1 in 5 teens have contemplated suicide.

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2024 PRIORITIES

As the national voice of more than 200 children's hospitals, Children's Hospital Association (CHA) advances child health through innovation in the quality, cost, and delivery of care in children's hospitals and health systems.

CHA AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS ASK FEDERAL POLICYMAKERS TO:

- Protect and strengthen Medicaid options to ensure patients, patients pay the least.
- Reduce support for the private marketplace.
- Address the children's mental health crisis.

As you know, children are not little adults. As Congress develops health care policy, we encourage you to prioritize and consider the unique needs of children and the providers that serve them, like children's hospitals.

Protect and advance Medicaid policy to improve child health.

Make Federal investments to address the children's mental health crisis.

Ensure that children and adolescents experience a mental health condition in a given year. The kids' mental health crisis has reached an inflection point, requiring action before the problem, with 84% of hospitals reporting more youth patients and 70% reporting longer hospital stays.

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Beyond Policy: Our Broader Advocacy Work

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Bipartisan Children's Health Care Caucus



Rep. Kathy Castor
(D-Fla.)



Rep. John Joyce, M.D.
(R-Penn.)

Ask your House delegation to join the Children's Health Care Caucus or thank them if they are already a member.

See the caucus membership list [here!](#)

Ad Council, Hospital Coalition on Gun Safety



Matthew Cook
CEO, Children's Hospital Association

"Gun violence is a public health crisis for children and their families. Children's hospitals are on the frontlines of pediatric emergency care, treating children and teens as they heal from the acute physical and enduring emotional wounds of gun violence, and supporting their families as they recover. It is our duty as an association of children's hospitals to bring awareness to the youth gun violence crisis and we are proud to join with other hospital leaders in a campaign to make children safer."

Made Possible By Your Children's Hospital

Brand awareness campaign.

Children's lives are marked by important moments. Big moments - birthdays, their first step, first day of school - and small moments - playing dress up with friends, a visit to the zoo, dinner with grandma.

Children's hospitals provide invaluable care to kids of all backgrounds, making it possible for kids and their families to experience the important moments—both big and small.

This campaign aims to promote the critical role of America's children's hospitals, the positive impact they have on patients across the country, and their advocacy priorities in Washington, D.C.



Family Advocacy Day 2024 – June 12-14



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CHA Resources



Medicaid access and managed care final rules [webinar recording](#) and slides.



CHA Medicaid access and managed care [final rules summaries](#).
• Access final rule summary.
• Managed care final rule summary.



CHA [Newsroom](#) for statements, press releases and executive commentary.

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Questions



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