2021 Policy Agenda
January 2021

Top Priorities

**COVID-19 response**: NCPeds will continue to advocate for policies to mitigate COVID impacts, including child development and isolation concerns; child physical and mental health; COVID vaccine distribution for health care providers; vaccine distribution within communities; and supporting practices reeling from economic loss, staffing shortages, and other challenges.

**Making sure that Medicaid reform works for kids**: NCPeds supports a strong Medicaid program that works well for the more than 1 million children and their families insured by Medicaid and CHIP. The State will move to managed care July 1 2021 for most people covered by Medicaid. NCPeds will monitor both legislative and administrative proposals relating to Medicaid reform, including access of children to strong primary and specialty care, impact on vulnerable populations, integration of appropriate behavioral health services, functionality of the Enrollment Broker, management of panels, administrative ease, fiscal viability of pediatric providers, especially those made vulnerable by COVID and successful roll-out during a time providers are already stretched thin responding to COVID.

**Workforce Adequacy and Preceptor Tax Credits**: NCPeds strongly supports medical teams and access by children to a full range of health care services. NCPeds specifically supports a preceptor tax credit to help promote placement of trainees into a variety of settings, including pediatrics and rural communities. NCPeds also supports efforts to improve workforce, including using Graduate Medical Education (GME) funds to attract and retain “home grown” physicians, especially in underserved areas and telehealth as a strategy to support, not supplant, the medical home.

**Other Areas of Support**

**Close the coverage gap**: More than half a million North Carolinians are unable to see a doctor when they need one because reliable health insurance is out of reach. Insurance can help assure adults are healthier before they conceive, leading to improved birth outcomes. When low-income parents are enrolled in Medicaid, their children are 29% more likely to have a well-child visit. Health insurance can also help parents address their own health issues, including opioid addiction. Populations of particular concern include pregnant and post-partum women and parents of foster children and youth.

**Prevent youth suicide and/or firearm-related deaths and injuries to children**: NCPeds is deeply concerned about the toll COVID is taking on youth mental health, especially given the concerning rate of teen suicide even prior to the social isolation that COVID has caused.

**Promote tobacco-use prevention and cessation, including vaping**: Promote tobacco use prevention and cessation in North Carolina through statewide, evidence-based and/or evidence-informed policies and appropriations for tobacco use prevention and cessation program.

**Vaccine promotion tied to the medical home**: In addition to the COVID vaccine, it remains critical that children remain protected against deadly communicable diseases such as measles and mumps. It is increasingly important that such routine vaccination are delivered in the medical home, where “catch up” care and mental health screenings can also occur. NCPeds will advocate for legislative and administrative policies to promote vaccination, assure strong ties to the medical home, including appropriate entry into databases.