



North Carolina Pediatric Society

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To NCDHHS Leadership:

Thank you for sharing the opportunity to comment on your draft Early Childhood Action Plan. We appreciate the array of measures designed to address young child well-being. We are happy to consult with you on specific goals or measures and to help link you with appropriate pediatricians as you move forward in your work.

We have three main recommendations:

- 1) **Close the health coverage gap:** Children, especially young children, will benefit from assuring more adults have access to appropriate health care coverage. Healthier adults are more likely to give birth to healthier babies. Mothers with access to maternal depression care and parents with access to substance abuse treatment and support for chronic conditions are better equipped to parent. Assuring parents receive timely mental health and other treatment can speed family reunification where appropriate. These are just a few examples of the benefits to children when their caretakers have access to health care.
- 2) **Coordinate ECAP and Medicaid Transformation:** Children represent 70% of the patients served in Medicaid and CHIP. Strong changes, such as enhancing Healthy Opportunities, should be assessed with an eye towards their impact on young child well-being. All outcomes should be monitored with a specific focus on children, including access to a medical home and appropriate specialists.
- 3) **Ensure access to Fostering Health NC services, including trauma-informed care:** Fostering Health NC helps ensure strong medical homes for children and youth involved in the child welfare system. This program (funded originally through ORH initially and currently through NCDSS with a contract to NCPeds) has been shown to increase well-visits, vaccine rates, and oral health for children in foster care as well as providing other benefits. Inclusion of Fostering Health NC is consistent with your guiding principles (using brain science to address trauma; promoting child-centered protective factors; building on existing cross-sector collaboration and infrastructure at the county and state levels; attention to vulnerable populations, etc.)

Thank you again for your work on behalf of children and their development.

Sincerely,

Susan Mims, MD, MPH, FAAP, Chapter President
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