2022 Policy Agenda
May 2022

Top Priorities

Promote a COVID-19 response that addresses the physical and mental health needs of children: NCPeds will continue to advocate for policies to mitigate COVID-19 impacts; promote physical and mental well-being of children; support equitable COVID-19 vaccine and treatment distribution; and support practices still grappling with economic losses, staffing shortages and other challenges.

Assure that Medicaid reform works for kids, including children and youth in foster care: NCPeds supports a strong Medicaid program that works well for the more than 1 million children and their families insured by Medicaid and CHIP. NCPeds has been deeply involved in the Standard Plan roll-out and continues to closely monitor implementation concerns. NCPeds will focus on the development of a strong and appropriate Specialized Plan for children and youth in foster care, leaving foster care and their families, including the need for one single statewide Plan to minimize disruption when children are placed in different regions of the state. NCPeds will continue to advocate for an aligned CHIP and Medicaid program to reduce administrative burden and reduce barriers for families. 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, and payment timeliness and administrative burden.

Recruit, Retain and Support Healthcare Workforce Adequacy: NCPeds strongly supports medical teams and access by children to a full range of health care services. NCPeds specifically supports development of sustained and strategic actions at every point of the health workforce pathway. Examples of strategies include recruiting candidates from rural areas, using Graduate Medical Education Funds strategically, growing preceptor opportunities, preventing burnout and promoting telehealth with strong ties to 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.

Prevent youth suicide and/or firearm-related deaths and injuries to children: NCPeds is deeply concerned about the toll COVID-19 is taking on youth mental health, especially given the concerning rate of teen suicide even prior to the social isolation that COVID-19 has caused. NCPeds supports the efforts of the Child Fatality Task Force including safe gun storage and the creation of a dedicated suicide prevention coordinator position.

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, including flavored products.