



American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## Florida Chapter

# Florida Pediatric Society President's Newsletter Vol.2 No.8

In this final newsletter of 2009, I will review some of our major accomplishments during this eventful and very productive year.

### Economic Issues

1. At long last, four years after it was filed, the trial in our Medicaid lawsuit began on December 7th after overcoming every effort by the state to have our case dismissed.
2. We supported the increase in tobacco taxes that will raise \$1 billion. The money was used to prevent draconian cuts in Florida's health-care safety net during this recession.
3. A Practice Management Committee was established, chaired by Jose Jimenez. It provides members with information and suggestions to assist them with running their practices. Their first newsletter, edited by Matt Corey, has been distributed.
4. We re-established our Pediatric Council. They had a meeting with insurance company representatives to discuss solutions to items of common concern including: coding and payment for obesity, payment for after hours' services, providing services for ADHD evaluations and treatment and Autism screening.
5. Under the leadership of Tommy Schechtman, we worked with state public health officials to coordinate their efforts with the private sector to institute their H1N1 immunization program.
6. We continue to closely monitor the health-care reform efforts in Washington. We recognize that exactly how those programs get implemented in Florida will be of vital interest to our members. We have a committee chaired by Rick Bucciarelli working to see that you are ably represented in those discussions.

### Practice Issues

1. We defeated the most anti-immunization bill in the nation filed during the 2009 Florida legislative session.
2. Our Annual Meeting, held in October, included a CME program instructing our membership in lobbying and media relations in preparation for the immunization battles we know will come in the 2010 legislative session.
3. With the help of Nancy Silva and our legislative committee we were

instrumental in passing a law mandating primary enforcement of seat-belt use.

4. Nancy Silva also identified sponsors for a bill that will be filed in the 2010 legislative session to have Florida mandate booster seat use by appropriate children.
5. We have prepared a unique child abuse prevention plan for Florida and have begun to raise funds for its implementation in 2010.
6. The Chapter signed on as an amicus to a brief seeking to overturn Florida's law that prevents any and all gays and lesbians from adopting children. We are the only state that has such a blanket prohibition.
7. A Breastfeeding Committee, chaired by Sandra Sullivan, was established to improve rates of success and duration of breastfeeding. In addition, it will assist our members in obtaining appropriate payment for the extra time spent in helping new mothers with their nursing difficulties.
8. Information and resources, provided by Deborah Mulligan, to prepare our offices and patients for disasters such as hurricanes was posted on our web site.
9. We presented information on the AAP's 5-2-1-0 obesity prevention program to two statewide childcare organizations in order to enlist their help in fighting this epidemic affecting our patients.

### **Chapter News**

1. Our officers and the Board of Directors are making a concerted effort to raise the visibility of the Chapter in Florida to members and the public alike by writing letters to the editor and being interviewed by print, TV and radio reporters etc.
2. Our Board of Directors named, Wil Blechman, the Director of Florida's Docs for Tots program, an honorary Chapter member so he could advise us on items related to early brain development.
3. We are continuing to coordinate our efforts with other child advocacy groups. Nancy Silva established a coalition with 24 other groups to work on our child automobile safety efforts.
4. We have started to write and produce short videos for our members that will include educational topics and weekly legislative updates during the spring session. They will be posted on our web site. Look for our first one immunization shortly.
5. The Chapter is increasing its coordination with the FMA to assist us in our lobbying and public health advocacy efforts. All four of the resolutions, written by Jose Jimenez, introduced on behalf of the Chapter in the FMA House of Delegates meeting this year passed. This insures the support of the FMA for those efforts in the upcoming year.
6. We co-sponsor a yearly educational meeting with All Children's Hospital geared toward the needs and interests of our young physician members.
7. Pediatric Residents are now active members of all our committees and participate in all our activities.
8. Joseph J. Tepas III was presented with the Lichblau Award by our Foundation this year as the outstanding Pediatric Surgeon in Florida

9. The category of affiliate member in our Chapter was opened to Pediatric Nurse Practitioners this year.

10. The Chapter has begun to seek out what members identify as their "burning issues". We have set up Chapter committees to work on those concerns and enlisted like-minded members to coordinate their efforts with the help and guidance of the Chapter as needed. This effort is ongoing so let us know if you have issues you want to work on. We can help you!

In these challenging economic times we are grateful that you have found your Chapter to be a valuable investment as evidenced by our record-breaking membership figures. Approximately three quarters of the practicing Pediatricians in Florida are members. However, we still need your support to continue the important initiatives our Chapter is pursuing. An urgent current need is funding for our Medicaid lawsuit. You can contribute by clicking on "Make a Donation" in the upper right hand corner of our web site.

We promise to continue to work diligently for the benefit of the Pediatricians of Florida and our patients.

Best wishes to all of you for a happy and healthy holiday season and the coming New Year.

Your comments are most welcome. If you would like further information on any of these topics, contact your regional representative or me at [jhisaac@aap.net](mailto:jhisaac@aap.net).

Jerry Isaac

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