

2025 PRIORITIES

When it comes to health care, children aren't just little adults. The same is true of children's hospitals, which have very different needs than adult hospitals. As Congress and the administration continue to develop health care policies in 2025, we encourage you to prioritize and consider the unique needs of children and the children's hospitals that serve them.

CHA and children's hospitals ask federal policymakers to:

1 PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN MEDICAID POLICY TO IMPROVE CHILD HEALTH.

Medicaid/CHIP is the single largest health insurer for children in the United States, covering some 37 million children¹. Nearly **3 million children in military-connected families** are covered by or eligible for Medicaid. On average, over 50% of children's hospitals' patients are covered by Medicaid/CHIP², and in 2023, **40.6% of children in small towns and rural areas** were enrolled in Medicaid/CHIP.

- Protect Medicaid from policies and cuts that would negatively impact access to care for children, including ensure changes made to Medicaid policy as a result of reconciliation don't unduly impact pediatric care, including provider taxes and SDPs.
- Pass the bipartisan **Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act**, which will improve children's access to needed out-of-state health care by streamlining the burdensome and time-consuming Medicaid provider screening and enrollment process.
- Prevent DSH cuts from moving forward.
- Continue focus on congressionally-mandated oversight of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) to ensure children can receive needed health care services.

2 PREVENT PROPOSALS THAT JEOPARDIZE CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO CARE.

Congress must consider the unique and harmful impact certain health care policies can have on access to care for children and adolescents, especially in rural and underserved areas. We urge Congress to look at how changes to vital programs could impact the ability of children, especially with complex medical needs, to get care closer to home.

- Oppose site neutral policies, including eliminating "facility fees" or other policies that reduce support for, and would have a negative impact on, pediatric care.
- Protect the 340B program from changes that could impede children's hospitals' ability to serve low-income, uninsured, and underinsured pediatric patients.
- Protect medical research programs and funding that improve children's lives.

1. "April 2025: Medicaid and CHIP Eligibility Operations and Enrollment Snapshot," U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, July 2025.
2. Annual Benchmark Report Fiscal Year 2023 Freestanding and Children's Hospital in Hospital Cohort, Children's Hospital Association, 2023.
3. "Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2013-2023," U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 2024.

3 BOLSTER FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR THE PEDIATRIC WORKFORCE.

Pediatrics shortages are more prevalent among providers who deliver specialized care, such as pediatric advanced practice nurses, acute care nurses, and pediatric medical tech professionals (e.g., pediatric respiratory technicians, pediatric pharmacists).

- Prioritize funding for **Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education** by supporting \$778 million in FY26 to boost the number of pediatricians and pediatric specialists.
- Expand eligibility for existing loan repayment and scholarship programs to the pediatric workforce.
- Invest in hospital-based pediatric nurse and other clinician training and retraining.
- Increase support for the pediatric workforce through Medicaid.

4 MAKE FEDERAL INVESTMENTS TO ADDRESS THE CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.

In 2023, 20% of adolescents seriously considered attempting suicide³.

- Strengthen mental health investment in Medicaid.
- Bolster community-based systems of care.
- Invest in pediatric mental health workforce and infrastructure.
- Permanently extend and enhance telehealth flexibilities.
- Improve implementation of the mental health parity law.
- Ensure support for mental health crisis services and suicide prevention designed to address the unique needs of children and teens.

To learn more about these topics and our work, visit childrenshospitals.org/advocacy.