



Children's Hospital Association

# 2024 PRIORITIES

Photo: Allyn DiVito, Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital

As the national voice of more than 200 children's hospitals, Children's Hospital Association (CHA) advances child health through innovation in the quality, cost, and delivery of care in children's hospitals and health systems.

## CHA AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS ASK FEDERAL POLICYMAKERS TO



Protect and strengthen Medicaid policy to ensure pediatric patients get the care they need.



Bolster support for the pediatric workforce.



Address the children's mental health crisis.

As you know, children are not little adults. As Congress develops health care policy, we encourage you to prioritize and consider the unique needs of children and the providers that serve them, like children's hospitals.

### Protect and advance Medicaid policy to improve child health.

Medicaid is the single largest health insurer for children in the United States, covering more than 35 million children. Nearly three million children in military-connected families are covered by or eligible for Medicaid.

- ▶ Pass the Bipartisan Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act (H.R. 4758) 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.
- ▶ Protect children's access to coverage and needed services as Medicaid redeterminations occur at the state level and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) conducts congressionally mandated oversight of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT).
- ▶ Eliminate the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program cuts.

### Bolster federal support for the pediatric workforce.

In pediatrics, shortages are more prevalent among those who provide specialized care, such as pediatric advanced practice nurses, acute care nurses, and pediatric medical tech professionals (e.g., pediatric respiratory technicians, pediatric pharmacists, etc.). In contrast, for adults, the largest workforce shortages are among primary care providers.

- ▶ Support the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program (CHGME), to boost the number of pediatricians and pediatric specialists.
- ▶ Expand the eligibility for existing loan repayment and

scholarship programs to the pediatric nonphysician workforce.

- ▶ Invest in hospital-based pediatric nurse and other clinician training and retraining.
- ▶ Increase support for the pediatric workforce through Medicaid.

### Make federal investments to address the children's mental health crisis.

One in five children and adolescents experience a mental health condition in a given year. The kids' mental health crisis has caused an increase in boarding compared to before the pandemic, with 84% of hospitals boarding more youth patients and 75% reporting longer boarding stays.

- ▶ Enact Helping Kids Cope Act (H.R. 2412), to make investments in growing and strengthening the pediatric mental health workforce and building community-based systems of care for pediatric mental health services.
- ▶ Pass EARLY Minds Act (H.R. 7808) to increase support for early intervention and prevention services.
- ▶ Strengthen mental health investment in Medicaid.
- ▶ Bolster community-based systems of care.
- ▶ Invest in pediatric mental health workforce and infrastructure.
- ▶ 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](https://www.childrenshospitals.org/advocacy).**