

Taking Care of Kids and Families— Connecticut Children's 2021 Public Policy Priorities

Connecticut Children's advocacy efforts are aimed at making sure that children's concerns are always heard when public policies are made. As we are facing a global pandemic, children and their families are experiencing additional challenges and health equity issues are coming into greater focus. Our advocacy work connects pediatric experts with elected officials and agency leaders working in Washington, D.C., Hartford, Connecticut, and with local officials all across the region. The promotion and preservation of children's optimal healthy development requires our constant focus and innovative solutions. Our advocacy agenda is designed to ensure we are proactively pursuing legislative and regulatory changes that will protect and enhance the physical and mental well-being of all children.



Access to Adequate and Affordable Care

- Strengthen Connecticut's Medicaid program by promoting access for children, parents, and pregnant women and ensuring that all eligible children have equitable access to appropriate care.
- Promote the implementation of reimbursement mechanisms that incentivize keeping children healthy by encouraging innovative payment models in Medicaid and private insurance.
- Extend the sunset date of Public Act 20-2 to institute permanent access to professional [telehealth services](#) provided in Connecticut across all payers and institute reimbursement parity for such services to help increase healthcare access for all children.
- Protect children with preexisting conditions and those families who may be subject to annual or lifetime caps on their health insurance policy by protecting certain key provisions of the Affordable Care Act.
- Help children have greater access to primary care by supporting community pediatricians and strengthening initiatives like PCMH+ that allow [Connecticut Children's Care Network](#) to foster better care closer to home and reduce healthcare costs.
- Identify opportunities on the state and federal levels to support the needs of children with complex medical conditions through the implementation of the [ACE Kids Act](#) and promoting access to comprehensive pediatric home care.
- Improve access to critical prescription drugs and treatments by defending programs like the [340B drug pricing program](#) and addressing high-cost drugs.
- Support and strengthen the [Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education](#) (CHGME) program so that all kids have access to pediatric experts.

Did you know...

Connecticut Children's averages about 250 telemedicine visits per day. During the height of the pandemic, that number was close to 600.





Keeping Children Healthy and Safe

- Promote education, research, and public policies that reduce [unintentional injury and violence among children and families](#). Issue areas include gun violence and firearm safety, suicide, family violence prevention, hospital-based violence intervention and safety among teen drivers and child passengers.
- Support development of assessment tools for pediatric providers to screen for, track and address risk factors related to the social factors that impact a child's health and development, otherwise known as the "social determinants of health."
- Strengthen community initiatives and building policies recognizing the impact that [healthy homes and neighborhoods](#) have on the health and well-being of children and families.

Did you know...

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in young people. In an effort to prevent youth suicide, Connecticut Children's conducts universal mental health screenings for all patients in the emergency department.



Did you know...

The Connecticut Children's Health Homes Program has made 3,104 housing units safer and healthier, benefiting the 1,800 children under the age of six who reside there.



Improving the Emotional Health of Children and their Families

- Advance innovative policies and practices that support a comprehensive and integrative behavioral health system for all children throughout their lives and in the communities where they live.
- Promote payment parity for behavioral health services in an effort to ensure all children receive the mental health care they need, when they need it.
- Support programs that support the connection between key adults influencers like parents, pediatricians, teachers, and coaches to learn more about children's emotional health needs and how best to help.



Promoting Innovation in Children's Health and Wellness

- Help foster key programs which help families navigate the pediatric health care 'ecosystem' by supporting and reimbursing for tools like [care coordination services](#) and advances in digital health
- Ensure pediatric researchers have the funding necessary to better understand children's development and mental health and to pursue cures and treatments for childhood diseases and conditions.
- Pursue funding for the [Pediatric Quality Measures Program](#) (PQMP) to help standardize and implement pediatric quality measures throughout the country to improve pediatric care and outcomes.