



## IDAHO CHAPTER American Academy of Pediatrics

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### Advocating for Kids

#### White Coat Day/Winter Business/Awards Dinner



## IDAHO CHAPTER American Academy of Pediatrics

### **White Coat Day**

Please join us for White Coat Day at the Capitol.

When: February 11 from 8-10 a.m.

Where: Capitol Building, Boise, ID

**Information:** Meet in the rotunda on the bottom floor at 8:00 a.m. for pictures. We will observe the Health and Welfare committee and meet some child advocate partners. You are encouraged to contact your legislators and set up a time to meet. We will be done around 10, but it is a casual morning, and you are welcome to stay and observe longer if you wish.

### **Winter Business/Award Dinner**

When: February 11 from 5:30-8 p.m.

Where: Cottonwood Grille, 913 West River Street, Boise, ID

AAP national and local legislative updates will be presented, our white coat day experience will be discussed, and we will be presenting the recipients with the following Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics awards:

Pediatric Provider of the Year  
Children's Advocate of the Year  
Organization of the Year

Hope to see you on February 11.

To RSVP to either event, please respond to [idahoaap@gmail.com](mailto:idahoaap@gmail.com).

## Advocating for Kids

### **Medicaid Healthy Connections Reinstatement Letter Sign-On**

The writer of the Medicaid Healthy Connections bill is requesting sign on as he talks with legislators about this bill. You can all send to your leadership team and inquire about willingness to formally sign on in support. Thank you.

Dear Colleagues,

I am reaching out to Idaho's primary care community—family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, FQHCs, and health systems alike—to request your review and support of **draft legislation to reinstate Medicaid Healthy Connections case management** funding from **January 1, 2026 until the start of the managed care (MCO) transition anticipated to be completed in 2029**.

As you know, the impending elimination of Healthy Connections case management will disrupt care coordination and add strain on clinics serving Idahoans. Reinstating this support—on a temporary but essential basis—will sustain the infrastructure that keeps primary care accessible during this transition period. We understand that a strong primary care system with access to care is essential to the health of Idahoans and fiscal health of the state. We invite you to:

**Review the draft legislation** outlining the proposed reinstatement of Healthy Connections case management.

**Read a case study from Pocatello Children's Clinic**, illustrating the impact of the funding loss on care coordination and outcomes.

**Add your practices or organizations name in support** of this legislative effort for inclusion in the 2026 legislative session.

You can access all materials and the sign-on form through the following link:

<https://form.jotform.com/252935267272059>

Our shared mission is to ensure that Idaho's Medicaid patients continue to receive coordinated, high-quality primary care throughout this transition. Your organization's voice—whether part of a large system, an FQHC, or an independent practice—makes a difference.

Thank you for your ongoing service to Idaho families and for standing together in support of patient-centered primary care.

With appreciation,

**Brian C Birch, MD FAAP**

[birch.md@tvkidsclinic.com](mailto:birch.md@tvkidsclinic.com)

Treasure Valley Children's Clinic  
Meridian, ID

## Spotlight on a Chapter Member

### **Thanks to Gracie Strubel**

Dr. Gracie Strubel, our resident serving on the Idaho AAP Executive Committee, presented at the Idaho Immunization Summit 2025 in Boise. Over 200 health care providers listened to her presentation, "Vaccination in the Age of Misinformation", which described our grant work and identified key ways to communicate with families.

## Spotlight on a Chapter Member (cont.)

### Thanking our Vaccine Champions

On December 1, Tom Patterson Chapter President, and Izzy Edwards, our social media person, visited 6 clinics in the Treasure Valley. They took bagels, cream cheese and holiday treats, with a message of thanks for being a vaccine champion, and sharing information on how to help parents access accurate information. Clinics received flyers identifying AAP experts to follow, QR codes and log-in information for our chapter parent landing page and social media platforms.

The plan is to visit 6 other clinics in the next couple of months with enhanced toolkits.



### What will Happen to our Idaho Kids When Vaccine Misinformation Reigns? (Noreen Womack)

During the legislative session, there will be a bill introduced to ban all immunization requirements. This bill is extremely dangerous and unnecessary, writes guest columnist Noreen Womack.

It has been my honor and privilege to practice general pediatrics in Idaho for 25 years. I have worked with families from Boise and Eagle to Nampa and Caldwell. But I feel compelled to speak out today because the world has shifted underneath my colleagues and me, and not in a good way. Until this year, I can honestly say:

Never have I ever thought I would worry about taking care of a child with measles, a disease that I have studied but have never seen before now, thanks to the MMR vaccine. However, because of misinformation spread by people who have **not** spent their lives taking care of kids, we have seen over 1,500 cases nationally this year, with more than one in 10 children needing to be hospitalized. And it's not just measles. Because of decreased immunization rates, more children have suffered and died from [measles](#), [influenza](#), and [pertussis](#) in the United States in the last year than during the past several decades combined.

Never have I ever seen a mother, paralyzed by doubt over the barrage of conflicting, politicized information, cry over whether or not to vaccinate her newborn ... not until last month.

Never have I ever thought that something that was proven wrong years ago would be brought up again as "fact" by people in authority. We know the MMR vaccine does not cause autism. Any supposed link has been robustly and repeatedly disproven by large-scale, independent, published studies conducted over many years.

Never have I ever imagined that individuals who misspell the names of the vaccine-preventable diseases, diseases that I have spent my professional life studying and treating, would hold sway over public health decisions.

The American people should be able to trust the government to use science, experience, and expertise when it comes to our nation's health. But today we have a secretary of Health and Human Services with no medical background who is pushing his own agenda. While I strongly believe that everyone is entitled to an opinion, I submit that Robert F. Kennedy Jr. should not be the person dictating health policy for all Americans.

### Spotlight on a Chapter Member (cont.)

#### **What will Happen to our Idaho Kids When Vaccine Misinformation Reigns? (Noreen Womack), cont.**

Vaccines save lives. They have done so for over a century. Do they carry potential adverse side effects and preservatives? Yes, they do; nobody has said otherwise. All medicines, such as intravenous antibiotics and chemotherapy agents, carry risks and also use preservatives. Should we have a federally-appointed attorney make life-and-death decisions about those as well? We, providers, go through years of medical training so we can spend our days helping families weigh the benefits and risks of all types of decisions, including vaccines. I do not need unfounded accusations in the room between my patient and me while I am practicing medicine.

So, who will protect the children in this year of falsehoods and half-truths? It is not our government, or perhaps not even the 67,000+ pediatricians across the U.S.

I believe it will be the parents. Because despite everything that has happened in the last several years, seventy-five percent of American parents across all political affiliations support vaccines and school entry requirements. If parents use their parental freedom to ignore the divisive noise and once again trust evidence and their medical providers, we can protect the progress we've made against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Next month, during Idaho's legislative session, there will be a bill introduced to ban all immunization requirements. This bill is extremely dangerous and unnecessary, as it is already very easy in our great state for families to opt out of vaccines if they choose. All this bill will do is send our record-low vaccination rates even lower, which will, in turn, cause more illness and death.

We need to step back from the constant barrage of information and demand medical facts over political fiction. Our children are counting on us.

*Statements made in this opinion piece are supported by pediatricians across the state through the Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.*

### Social Media Update

#### **Social Media Snapshot – December**

In December, we gained 14 new followers for a total of 91, reached over 4,500 views, and received 144 interactions, including likes, shares, saves, comments, and replies on Instagram. Compared to November, overall views increased by 1,200.

One highlight from December was visiting Treasure Valley pediatric offices with Dr. Patterson to deliver goodie baskets that included flyers linking to trusted child health information and our social media channels. It was a meaningful opportunity to connect face-to-face with child health providers and highlight how Idaho AAP's social media can help redirect parents' social media content toward quality, trustworthy, and evidence-based child health and safety information.

Another highlight was our Elf on the Shelf series during the first few weeks of December. This included an elf story takeover featuring holiday-themed child health and safety content. Additional posts throughout the month focused on winter driving conditions, winter emergency kit checklists, winter car seat safety, a hepatitis B informational post, and what families should know about respiratory virus season post.

Looking ahead to January, we will continue to share winter-related health and safety information along with vaccine confidence messaging. Content ideas for the new year include a New Year's resolution checklist for parents, promotion of the free AAP Kids Vaccines parent webinar taking place on January 30, and posts in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month.

If you have content ideas that feel relevant to the new year, please email me at [izzoblue10@gmail.com](mailto:izzoblue10@gmail.com). Additionally, if you are on Instagram or Facebook yourself and see a quality and trustworthy post you would like me to highlight on our social media, please DM me and I will try to put it up on our story ASAP.

(cont. on next page)

## Social Media Update

### **Social Media Snapshot – December (cont.)**

Feeling inspired by the new year? Take a peek at this checklist:

#### Idaho AAP Members' New Year's Resolution Checklist

- ☐ Help us reach 100 followers by recruiting family members to follow our Facebook and Instagram;
- ☐ Interact with our posts! (like, comment, add to story, repost – this really helps our message reach non-followers/potential new followers!);
- ☐ Email an idea for future topics you'd like Idaho AAP to cover;
- ☐ Email [izzoblue10@gmail.com](mailto:izzoblue10@gmail.com) with a New Year's checklist item you would love to see parents include in their resolutions for 2026.

Happy New Year!

Isabel Edwards

Instagram: @idahoapeditrics

Facebook: Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Email: [izzoblue10@gmail.com](mailto:izzoblue10@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Educational Opportunities/Meetings/Events

### **2026 AAP Advocacy Conference**



**Registration Open: 2026 AAP Advocacy Conference – April 12-14, 2026; Early Bird Deadline January 30, 2026**

Registration for the 2026 AAP Advocacy Conference is [now open](#)! The conference will take place April 12–14, 2026, in Arlington, VA – just across the Potomac River from Washington, DC.

Information about the conference, including promotional language that can be used to share conference information with your chapter members, was sent to chapter presidents, vice presidents, and executive directors on Tuesday, December 2, 2025. Search for "[chapterannouncements@aap.org](mailto:chapterannouncements@aap.org)" in your inbox.

If you have any questions, please contact the [Advocacy Conference](#) team.

### **Phoenix Children's to Host 49<sup>th</sup> Hybrid CME Conference for General Pediatricians**

Monday-Thursday, March 2-5, 2026, Phoenix Children's will offer its 49th Annual Pediatric Update, a premier national CME conference tailored to general pediatricians. Featured speakers include: Dr. Adam Ratner (NYU); Dr. Amanda Downey (UCSF), Dr. Jenny Radesky, (U. Michigan) and Dr. Mike Pitt (U. Minnesota). For a full schedule of speakers/topics, go to <https://www.pchpediatricupdate.com>. To learn what last year's audience had to say, access verbatim evaluations from the FAQ page. [Register Now](#).



## Upcoming Educational Opportunities/Meetings/Events (cont.)

### **National Perinatal Association 2026 Interdisciplinary Conference**

2026 INTERDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE



## UNITING for IMPACT

Advancing Rural-Urban  
Collaboration and Innovation  
in Perinatal and Infant Health



Please accept this invitation to [JOIN US](#) for our  
**2026 Interdisciplinary Conference**

### UNITING for IMPACT

Advancing Rural-Urban Collaboration and Innovation  
in Perinatal and Infant Health

March 25 - 27, 2026

in [Coeur d'Alene, Idaho](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Resources

### **Pediatrics on Call Podcasts – a resolution for the new year**



Subscribe to the podcast today!

Add *Pediatrics On Call* to your smart-speaker device or subscribe for updates on Apple, Google, Spotify, or wherever you listen to podcasts. Learn more at [aap.org/podcast](http://aap.org/podcast), and share this email with your medical colleagues and partners in child health.



## Resources

### PREP Blocks: A New Era of Pediatric Learning

PREP® (Pediatrics Review and Education Program) is the flagship self-assessment program of the AAP. Pre-sales for the new PREP Blocks began on December 10, 2025, and the PREP Blocks will be released at the end of January 2026. Trusted PREP content will be delivered on a refreshed desktop experience and new mobile app, offering high-quality, learner-centric content for pediatric professionals.



PREP Blocks are sets of 20 case-based self-assessment questions in a specific content area. Each block offers up to 4 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* and 4 MOC Part 2 Points. Blocks are valid for 3 years from release and can be purchased individually or as part of PREP Blocks Plus, which are sold as a set or with another item (eg, AAP journal). Users can mix and match blocks to focus on their learning needs. [Click here](#) for more information, including a purchasing guide.

### Oral Health in Primary Care

The poster has a teal background with white and yellow text. At the top left is a white tooth icon. To its right is the University of Idaho School of Health and Medical Professions logo, which includes a yellow 'I' and the text 'University of Idaho School of Health and Medical Professions'. Further right is the Project ECHO logo. The main title 'Oral Health in Primary Care' is in large white font. Above it, '3rd Tuesdays 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. MT' is written in a script font. Below the title, the date '01.20.2026' and the subtitle 'Supporting Oral Health in Pregnancy and Childhood' are in white. A QR code is on the right with the text 'Enroll now!' and the URL 'https://bit.ly/OralHealthPC'. At the bottom left, it says 'Featuring: Erica Craven, RDH, CDHC, Oral Health Coalition Manager, Florida Voices for Health'. At the bottom right is a photo of Erica Craven. At the bottom left, there is a small logo for 'JOINTLY ACCREDITED PROVIDER' and a paragraph of text about accreditation.

## Book Corner

*A New Baby for our Family* (Activity Book) by MaNaLeo, Dr. Tambi OB/Gyn

This engaging activity book is designed to help your child adjust to the arrival of a new baby in the family. Packed with fun and interactive activities, children are encouraged to express their emotions, share in the excitement of, and discover the joys and challenges of welcoming a new sibling.

From identifying objects and counting, to "I Spy" games, this book offers a variety of creative activities that are both entertaining and meaningful. Relatable family moments are brought to life - like helping out with the new baby or understanding a newborn's needs - fostering empathy and strengthening sibling bonds from the onset. This activity book also provides a healthy outlet for your child's emotions, offering an avenue to process their feelings while reminding them that they are loved, and remain an important part of the family. Perfect for toddlers and young children, it creates an opportunity for you to spend quality time with your child as you explore and enjoy the activities side by side.

*When Our New Baby Comes: The Wonderful Gift of a Sibling* by Aubrey Coleman and Hsulynn Pang

A gentle, beautifully illustrated board book that celebrates the joy of a new sibling and offers reassuring language for little ones.

*Andre The Best Big Brother* by Mikaela Wilson

A sweet, simple story about being a big brother and adjusting to changes at home.

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