

Rhode Island Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics

Board of Directors Meeting June 18, 2008

*Hasbro Children's Hospital
Collis Conference Room*

Minutes

Attending: Andrew Snyder, MD; Presiding, Members: Doctors: Brian Alverson, M.D., April Buchanan, M.D., Robert Burke, M.D., Ailis Clyne, M.D. Patricia Flanagan, M.D., Ellen Gurney, M.D., William Hollinshead, M.D., Lisa Keswick, M.D., Robert Klein, M.D., Pamela High, M.D., M.D., Elizabeth Lange, M.D., Peter Pogocar, M.D. Roz Vaz, M.D., Frank Donahue, Executive Director, Elaine La Roche, Administrative Coordinator

President Andrew Snyder convened the meeting at 6:15 p.m., and the minutes of the April Board Meeting were approved on a motion by Brian Alverson and second by Lisa Keswick.

Legislative Report:

Pat Flanagan, Chair of Legislative Committee, reported on the status of several initiatives proposed by the Governor and currently before the General Assembly.

- **Rite Care:** The Governor proposes to reduce the Rite care program by removing undocumented immigrant parents and children from eligibility for Rite Care and a host of other health and social service programs to accomplish a savings in FY 2009 of \$ 68,000,000. This will result in over 3,000 children being removed from the Rite Care Program effective June 30.
- **Medicaid Waiver:** The Governor is proposing the state apply for a Medicaid Waiver which would if approved by the General Assembly and the federal government, cap state spending on Medicaid for a five year period in return for a guaranteed amount of federal funds. The key points of the waiver are: caps state spending on the biggest item in the RI budget, guarantees federal funding at a slightly higher, fixed amount, limits spending for elder care, Rite care, developmental disability programs and allows the state latitude in the interpretation of program guidelines for existing programs. Of concern would be relaxation of the provisions of such established programs as ESPDT and others. The General Assembly is concerned and will hold hearings on the proposal. There is very high concern on the part of community children's agencies but little is known about the specifics of the plan. AAP is providing counsel to RIAAP and is watching closely the progress of the proposal.

- Brian Alverson reported that the legislation to permit breast feeding in public places has passed the House and Senate but has not as yet been signed by the Governor. It will become law because it was heavily supported in both houses and would withstand a veto of the Governor which is highly unlikely.
- The HIV legislation outlook is very unclear at this time. The ACLU has concerns and issues and the bill which the entire medical community stands behind has not come out of the senate HHS Committee as the General Assembly session nears adjournment. The ACLU is suggesting the bill be carried into the 2009 session of the legislature so that issues can be clarified and resolved. This is not acceptable to the very active section of the medical community who see as an attempt to water down and weaken the bill. The DOH will publish rules for newborn testing but issue remain on the cost and coverage of testing for the newborn.
- Beth Lange reported the Thimerosal legislation was introduced in the House by Representative Jackson for the 5th year in a row. Beth testified at the HEW Committee hearing in concert with the Department of Health. The expectation is that the bill will not come out of the HEW committee this year.
- Pamela High spoke concerning the Governor's plan to reduce substantially funding for the Head Start Program... The Governor has reduced the number of available slots by 250 for FY 2009. Advocates including RIAAP have testified in the House Finance Committee to restore these funds.
- Children's Town meeting Concept: Brian Alverson suggested the Chapter consider holding one or two town meeting type forums around the state during the upcoming election year to air children's health issues with public participation. The concept might be funded through grant funding. Dr. Snyder and the Board agreed this is an idea to be followed up on during the next few months.

Fund Raising:

Frank Donahue reported that sponsorship recruitment for the RIAAP 2 Annual Golf tournament is underway. The date is Monday, August 25 with a shotgun start at 1:00 PM. At this time the Chapter has sought support from various medical care organizations, insurers, businesses and industries. The goal of this year's tournament is \$15,000 for support of the Chapter's advocacy and educational purposes.

Young Physicians Grant:

The Chapter has a \$2,500 grant from AAP to recruit young physician to membership in the AAP and to the Chapter. Lisa Keswick, applicant for the grant is preparing a campaign directed to new arrived pediatricians in Rhode Island, residents and fellows. By definition, AAP considers young physicians to be 40 years or younger. Lisa will be preparing a "Welcome" kit as part of the campaign. Pamela High mentioned that new fellow will be in the period August 19 -26 and that might be an opportunity to do some recruiting.

New Web Site:

Andy discussed progress on the new web site for the Chapter. The Website will be far more dimensional and allow members to access information more easily. For instance Chapter Committees Chairs will be able to place selected information of interest to their members on line. The site will have a public availability and a “members only” capacity. It could be a site for timely information for parents or other child professionals. There will be a member segment, professional, school nurse and child care providers, legislators and public officials, media, parents etc. The new site will allow on line registration for continuing education, payment of dues or registration for special events such as the golf tournament. The contractor for the project is Embolden Design and a contract is being prepared at this time with completion by October 2008.

Chapter Foundation: Frank Donahue will explore the pros and cons of developing a foundation as 22 other chapters have done. Massachusetts recently organized a foundation entity. Frank will visit Massachusetts in September and discuss with their ED the pros and cons of a foundation entity for a chapter. Pat Flanagan, who is a member of the Rhode Island Foundation Board of Directors, will work with Frank on assessing the benefits and issues in considering a recommendation to the RIAAP Board of Directors.

Public Health Report: Bill Hollinshead advised the Board that the Division of Community, Family Health and Equity is preparing its 2008 Family Health Plan and is soliciting input from parents, providers and community stakeholders. A document listing eight categories for comment was distributed to the Board for review, comment and hopefully input. The plan when developed from this input will shape the Division’s plan for Maternal and Child Health Services. Member are encouraged to respond by completing the questionnaire and return to the division by e-Mail, fax or regular mail within the next 10 days.

Recognition of Service: Beth Lange recognized out going President Andy Snyder for his service to the Chapter as President. She cited Andy’s outstanding leadership in advocacy for children, improving communication through technology and advancement of pediatrics in Rhode island as reasons why the Chapter is stronger and more visible in the community. Beth presented Andy with a small gift of appreciation for his service.

Lifespan Merger Issue: Beth presented the issue of the proposed Lifespan merger to the Board. The proposal to merge Care New England with Lifespan is now in the process of being reviewed by the DOH and the Attorney General’s Office. Although not technically as yet under review, the proposal has been delivered to both reviewers to determine if all papers are in order as proscribed. After that has been completed the formal review process will begin. Beth advised that RIAAP should consider its ramification on the practicing RI pediatric community. If there are concerns they must be conveyed to the reviewers before the official start of the review begins as they cannot “hear” objections or concerns once the official review commences. Discussion of the pros and cons of the proposal were aired and it was suggested that RIAAP convene a meeting of pediatricians

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to determine their issues and concerns. Beth will try and do that within the tight timeframe permitting.

Adjournment: 8:30 PM