

Nevada Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



**Nevada Chapter,
American Academy of
Pediatrics**

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INTERIM 2019-2020
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Friday, 24 July 2020

The Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Nevada AAP) appreciates the members of the 2019-2020 Legislative Committee on Health Care reviewing our recommendations for policies we believe will improve pediatric health outcomes in Nevada. The Committee is welcome to contact Nevada AAP Executive Director Leann D. McAllister should you require additional information regarding these recommendations at ED@NevadaAAP.org or on her cell phone 508-685-0918.

1. RECOMMENDATION: Implement Sugary Drink Taxes

Sugary drink consumption can lead to negative health effects like heart disease, diabetes, and tooth decay. In locations where sugary drink taxes have been implemented, there is documented significant decreases in consumption. Not only does the tax improve health outcomes for children in Nevada, but potentially could raise millions in much needed revenue for schools and pediatric care. Over the past year, the US has seen an increase in states and cities debating and implementing sugary drink taxes.

Supporting Links

[Las Vegas Sun: More evidence that soda taxes cut soda drinking](#)

[Las Vegas Review-Journal: Las Vegas could gain \\$25.2M in revenue from soda tax, report says](#)

[Las Vegas Review-Journal: States renew push for taxes on sugary drinks](#)

[AAP: Sugary Drink Taxes](#)

2. RECOMMENDATION: Increase Tobacco Taxes

Increased product price has proven to reduce youth tobacco use. Additionally, tobacco tax increases are a reliable source of new revenue. There should not be loopholes in which some tobacco products are regulated and taxed less stringently than others. Free samples of tobacco products, along with coupons, discounts, and rebates should be banned. Internet sales of tobacco products should also be banned.

Supporting Links

[Map Of State Cigarette Tax Rates](#)

[State Cigarette Excise Tax Rates & Rankings](#)

[AAP Public Policy to Protect Children From Tobacco, Nicotine, and Tobacco Smoke](#)

[Tobacco Tax Increases are a Reliable Source of Substantial New State Revenue](#)

[Raising Cigarette Taxes Reduces Smoking, Especially Among Kids \(And The Cigarette Companies Know It\)](#)

The Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is incorporated in the state of Nevada.

3. RECOMMENDATION: **Raise the Minimum Age to Purchase Tobacco to 21 Years**

Because most people who become tobacco dependent do so before 21 years of age, increasing the minimum age of purchase to 21 years and enforcing this regulation will protect a larger proportion of the population from becoming tobacco dependent. Enforcement activities that disrupt the commercial distribution of tobacco to minors are consistently associated with reductions in youth smoking rates. 77 percent of Nevadans surveyed favored limiting tobacco sales to those 21 and older.

Supporting Links

[Las Vegas Review-Journal: Congress on verge of setting smoking age at 21 in US, Nevada](#)

[The Nevada Independent: Youth tobacco sales in Nevada are down as new federal law raising tobacco age to 21 takes effect](#)

[AAP Public Policy to Protect Children From Tobacco, Nicotine, and Tobacco Smoke](#)

4. RECOMMENDATION: **Set Medically Accurate Mandatory Sex Education Standards**

We have a responsibility to make sure young people have access to essential, potentially lifesaving information and contraception options to protect their overall health. Withholding information and resources about how to make decisions about one's sexual health — which includes LGBTQ-inclusive information about consent, STI screenings, contraception, and reproductive health — can have a debilitating impact. Sex education is not optional.

Supporting Links

[Reno Gazette Journal: Young people in Washoe County need updated sex ed, says assistant professor of pediatrics](#)

[Nevada Current: Kavanaugh, Me Too point up need to modernize Nevada sex ed](#)

[The Nevada Teen Health and Safety Coalition Advocating for better sex education in Nevada](#)

[AAP: Sexuality Education for Children and Adolescents](#)

5. RECOMMENDATION: **Set School Start Time After 8:30 AM for Middle and High School**

It has been six years since the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics came out with very clear guidelines that teenagers not start school before 8:30 in the morning. In October 2019, neighboring California became the first state in the nation to mandate later start times and their experience can assist Nevada with logistical and financial considerations. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that delaying school start times is an effective countermeasure to chronic sleep loss and has a wide range of potential benefits to students physical and mental health, safety, academic and athletic achievement.

Supporting Links

[AAP Policy Statement: School Start Times for Adolescents](#)

[CDC: Schools Start Too Early](#)

[KTNV: Experts say later school start times better for children's health and academic performance](#)

[The Atlantic: How School Start Times Affect High-School Athletics](#)

[LA Times: California law pushing back school start times may mean more sleep for some local students](#)

6. **RECOMMENDATION: Remove Non-Medical Exemptions for Childhood Immunizations**

Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illness pose a significant health threat to children in Nevada and a financial threat to schools and the larger community in general. Just last year, Nevada experienced an outbreak of vaccine-preventable Whooping Cough which led to school closures in Reno and disrupted school activities including classes and athletic events. Further, "religious" or "personal" exemptions in vaccine laws fuel conspiracy theories and activists who dangerously impact public health efforts by spreading false information.

Supporting Links

[KOLO8 News Now: 35 employees kept home amid whooping cough cases at Damonte H.S.](#)

[KOLO8 News Now: Whooping Cough closes Bishop Manogue HS](#)

[KNPR: Anti-Vaccination Activists Join Stay-At-Home Order Protesters](#)

[AAP State Advocacy Focus on Childhood Immunizations](#)

7. **RECOMMENDATION: Mandate Nevada Medicaid Meet Medicare Pay Parity**

Nevada Medicaid, and the associated MCOs, must pay at least at the same rate as Medicare to ensure pediatric access to care. Decades of research has demonstrated that increasing the generosity of Medicaid by itself is enough to improve access to care and the health of low-income populations. Pediatricians often provide care for a large portion of Medicaid patients which pays well below Medicare rates for the same services. In the first two years of the Affordable Care Act, which increased Medicaid payment to Medicare parity level for two years, office-based primary care pediatricians increased their Medicaid participation.

Supporting Links

[Closing the Gap: The Impact of the Medicaid Primary Care Rate Increase on Access and Health](#)

[AAP: Increased Medicaid Payment and Participation by Office-Based Primary Care Pediatricians](#)

[AAP: Extend Medicaid Payment Equity](#)

8. **RECOMMENDATION: Extend Medicaid for all Women One Year Post Birth**

Critical to giving newborns a healthy start is the physical and mental wellbeing of postpartum women. Since the late 1980s, the US has seen a significant increase in the death of women while pregnant or within 1 year of the end of pregnancy. Post Affordable Care Act (ACA) data have demonstrated that in states where Medicaid for new mothers has been expanded beyond the required 60 days, health outcomes for the mother and child are significantly improved. In addition to calling for one-year coverage post birth, Nevada AAP joins other Nevada advocates in calling for extending Medicaid coverage for up to 205% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) as well as extending coverage to lawfully residing immigrant pregnant women.

Supporting Links

[Nevada Current: There's so much Nevada doesn't know about maternal mortality](#)

[AAP: Insurance for New Mothers living in Poverty – What Needs to be Done?](#)

[AAP: ACA Medicaid Expansion and Insurance Coverage Among New Mothers Living in Poverty Expanding Postpartum Medicaid Coverage](#)

[Increasing Postpartum Medicaid Coverage Could Reduce Maternal Deaths and Improve Outcomes](#)

[Confronting Maternal Mortality Crisis: New Resources Track State Progress on Extending Medicaid Postpartum Coverage](#)

9. RECOMMENDATION: **Adequately Fund Sex Trafficking Victim Services**

Although Nevada has made significant strides over recent years to protect the victims of sex trafficking, experts in Nevada report that many victims remain reluctant to call upon law enforcement fearing incarceration and criminal prosecution. Victims of sex trafficking require significant support services including housing, nutrition, security, education, legal representation, counseling, and health care.

Supporting Links

[Las Vegas Sun: Teen prostitution case offers glimpse into state's fight against sex trafficking](#)

[Nevada Current: Blaming the victims? The legal quandary of child sex trafficking](#)

[Las Vegas Review-Journal: FBI rescues 14 minors in Las Vegas sex trafficking sweep](#)

[AAP Global Human Trafficking and Child Victimization](#)

10. RECOMMENDATION: **Fund Illicit Substances Screen and Treatment of Pregnant Women**

Nevada nurseries should follow a protocol that defines indications and procedures for screening for maternal substance abuse. In addition, each nursery should adhere to a standardized plan for the evaluation and comprehensive treatment of infants at risk for or showing signs of withdrawal. Pregnant women must trust that treatment is prioritized over criminal prosecution in Nevada.

Supporting Links

[My News 4 Addicted Nevada: babies born with an opioid addiction](#)

[AAP A Public Health Response to Opioid Use in Pregnancy](#)

[AAP Neonatal Drug Withdrawal](#)