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News Release

Pediatricians are Open to Care for Children

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Lenexa, KS – The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) is encouraging families to maintain routine pediatric appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person, routine well-child visits are still recommended for all children at this time.

The American Academy of Pediatrics released guidance on May 8, 2020 that encouraged the continuation of well-child care stating “The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports the continued provision of health care for children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, well-child care should be provided consistent with the [Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents](#) (4th Edition) and the corresponding [Bright Futures/AAP Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care](#) (Periodicity Schedule).”

“We worry about the health effects for children that do not have their scheduled well checks and immunizations during this pandemic,” said Lisa Gilmer, MD, FAAP. “During those exams we screen for depression and anxiety in adolescents, follow up on asthma and allergies, and provide additional important preventative care that keeps kids healthy.”

While many non-essential procedures, surgeries and visits were postponed in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health officials made it clear that those decisions were made to preserve personal protective equipment for health care professionals, not because hospitals or doctor’s offices are unsafe places to visit. Pediatric practices in Kansas have adjusted their operations, putting new policies in place to keep patients and families safe during office visits. Families should call their pediatrician to inquire about what their practice is doing during this time to accommodate well visits, vaccinations, and visits for other concerns.

Data released from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) showed a significant drop in amount of vaccines ordered by physicians and other medical providers in April 2020 compared to April 2019. Overall, there was a decrease of 21,143 vaccine orders submitted to the state for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program in April 2020 compared to 2019, which is a 56 percent drop.

With the drop in well-child visits and immunizations the Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP) is concerned about secondary outbreaks of vaccine-preventable illnesses.

This summer offers an opportunity to catch up on the well check visits and vaccinations that were missed this past spring. Every possible effort should be made by families and primary care providers to get children back up to date. Our state herd immunity is fragile, and it is important that physicians and families work together to make sure all Kansas children are protected against vaccine preventable disease especially during this unprecedented time.

We must take this time now to urgently prioritize well-check visits this summer so Kansas children will be in the safest and healthiest position for the 2020-21 flu/winter season. Even during this time of uncertainty KAAP is hopeful we can work together, innovate, and do what is right to take care of Kansas kids.

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The Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is a membership organization including about 90% of the pediatricians in the state with a mission of the attainment by all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults of their full potential for physical, mental, emotional, and social health. Together with those who share this purpose, the Kansas Chapter pledges its efforts and expertise to a fundamental goal- that all children and youth have the opportunity to grow up safe and strong, with faith in the future and in themselves.