



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Tennessee Chapter

INCORPORATED IN TENNESSEE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



A WORD FROM OUR LEADERS



CARLEND A SMITH, MD
PRESIDENT



RUTH E. ALLEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect upon 2024, we are filled with profound gratitude and would like to share the remarkable achievements of our chapter. This has been a period of inspiring growth and meaningful collaboration.

Our organization's financial stability continues to grow with consistent increases in our reserves year over year and through our endowment fund initiated under the guidance of Dr Stuart Weinburg. We continue to expand our statewide initiatives, including our staff's extensive outreach efforts in quality improvement, payor advocacy, and regional and state-wide provider training programs.

Our advocacy initiatives have shown a meaningful impact this year. We helped pass legislation important to children and pediatricians and staved off some of the harmful ones. The Be SMART program delivered six comprehensive presentations on firearm safety and violence prevention, including practical interventions through gun lock distribution. We expanded our support for early career physicians, funding attendance for two at the AAP Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C. and the National Conference in Orlando, fostering the next generation of pediatric leaders.

We've secured important grant awards and extensions that will enhance our educational reach. The BeHiP grant expansions will support additional training and learning collaboratives, while our extended Immunization grant allows us to broaden the reach of our educational curriculum and ECHO project.

This year we successfully launched our regional mixer program, creating valuable networking opportunities across the state. These events strengthened our professional community and provided for meaningful connections among members despite geographic distance.

While we've made substantial progress, significant work remains ahead. We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with each of you as we continue our mission of advocating for children's health and supporting the physicians who serve them.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to TNAAP and the children of Tennessee.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlenda Smith".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth E. Allen".



OUR MISSION

The Tennessee Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is committed to being a leading voice, advocate, and authority for the physical, mental, and social welfare of infants, children and adolescents, as well as the pediatricians who care for them.

OUR EFFORTS

Advocacy continues to be reported as our number one member benefit.

TNAAP's 2024 advocacy efforts involved numerous bills that were introduced that would impact children, families, and pediatricians at both the state and federal level.



STATE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

At the state level, we monitored hundreds of bills. We advocated for responsible firearm regulations, scope of practice issues, child safety concerns, and we continued work to promote vaccine confidence and protection of routine childhood immunizations. Some examples are listed below.

SUPPORTED

- "The Dr. Benjamin Mauck Act" created an enhanced penalty for assault and aggravated assault within a healthcare facility.
- "The Smart Heart Act" requires all high schools to have at least one AED that is accessible during the school day and at all school sport activities. It requires an annual review and rehearsal of an athletics emergency action plan and that each school develop and adopt a cardiac emergency response plan. The bill also adds CPR and AED training to the required annual training for coaches and athletic directors.
- The hybrid team-based care bill established scope of practice for physician assistants and allows for rules governing collaborative practice agreements between physician assistants and physicians. For a physician assistant to be able to enter into a collaborative practice agreement, the physician assistant must have at least 6,000 hours of documented post-graduate clinical experience, have a physician willing to enter a collaborative agreement, and meet other such requirements set forth in rules.

OPPOSED

- A bill that would have prohibited DCS from accepting anonymous reports for child abuse or neglect.
- A bill that would have removed authority from CDC and AAP to recommend vaccinations for children under two and replaced it with the Commissioner of Health.

Unfortunately, several bills were passed that we did not support such as a bill prohibiting DCS from requiring that a foster parent be vaccinated against flu and whooping cough prior to fostering a child in DCS custody and the "Families Rights and Responsibilities Act." Other bills we supported were taken off notice including one intended to amend some negative consequences caused by a mature minor bill passed the in 2023.



Day on the Hill: Wednesday, March 6, 2024

Over 50 pediatricians and residents took part in the day, which included meetings with 20 members of the General Assembly from all parts of the state. The day started with a welcome from Matt Yancey, Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, along with state Senator Sam Whitson. The AED bill was taken up by the Senate Education Committee in the afternoon, where it passed with unanimous support. Special thanks to Melanie Bull, Jim Schmidt, Hunter Butler, MD, Barbara Dentz, MD, and Dee Sinard, MD for their countless hours of work for TNAAP.

ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND PEDIATRICIANS

TNAAP signed on to many letters to congressional leadership in 2024 including the Online Safety Act, Protecting America's Children by Strengthening Families Act, and the Sandy Hook Anniversary Letter.



- Regular e-blast updates to members on important topics, such as CDC recommending physicians switch to using the Tdap vaccine when protection against tetanus is required.
- Leadership attended National AAP legislative conference and lobbied on Capitol Hill for legislation to keep children safe online (referred to as the Kids Online Safety Act) and the need to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Service for Children program.
- Sponsored two residents to attend the AAP Advocacy Conference.
- Sponsored two residents to attend the AAP National Conference and Exhibition (NCE).
- Monitored and provided feedback on TennCare dis-enrollments.
- Met quarterly with TennCare and representatives of other state agencies.
- Worked with TennCare to remove the prior authorization requirement for generic Flovent on CoverKids formulary.
- Kept members abreast of the guidance around administering Beyfortis for RSV prevention.
- Two Chapter Chats with the National AAP each month.
- Represented pediatricians at the TMA House of Delegates Meeting.
- Continued to partner with TMA to offer MATE Act training for pediatricians.
- Chapter supported Hurricane Helene relief through contributions to six foundations in Upper East Tennessee.

PROMOTION OF FIREARM SAFE STORAGE

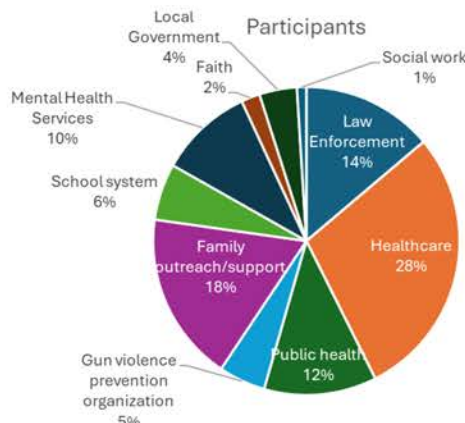


Be SMART Lunch & Learns

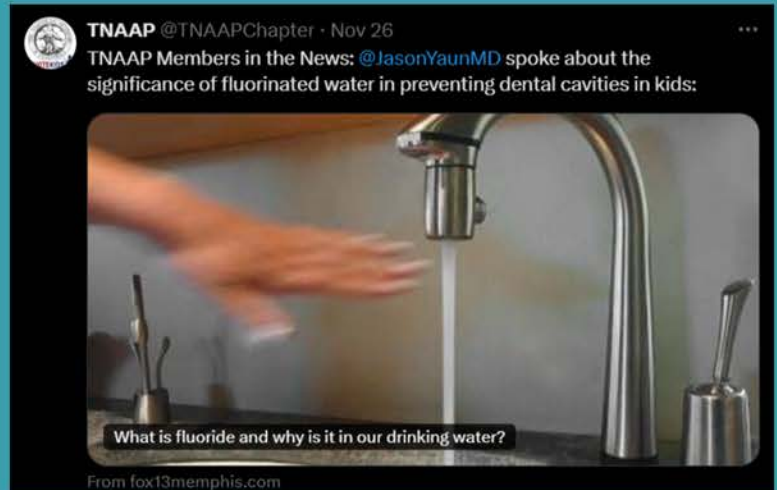
Firearm suicide in youth has reached its highest rate in over 20 years. In response, TNAAP sponsored 6 free Lunch & Learn sessions across the state in Memphis, Chattanooga, Gallatin, Clarksville, Oak Ridge and Manchester. These gatherings, led by Kelsey Gastineau, MD and Alanna Truss, PhD, shared a tailored approach to reduce youth suicide by promoting safe firearm storage via the Be SMART model and sharing 988 crisis lifeline resources as well as handing out resource bags including educational materials and 5 gun locks per bag.

Groups represented at Lunch & Learns:

- Law Enforcement
- Healthcare Workers
- Gun Violence Prevention Organizations
- Health Departments
- Family Support Organizations
- Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Organizations
- Policy Makers
- Schools
- Faith Organizations



TNAAP HIGHLIGHTED IN THE MEDIA



TNAAP REPRESENTATION WITH AAP



2024 AAP Leadership Conference

TNAAP President Carlenda Smith, MD; AAP VP Sue Kressly, MD; TNAAP VP Catherine Wiggleton, MD; AAP President Ben Hoffman, MD; TNAAP Executive Director Ruth Allen



2024 AAP Leadership Conference

TNAAP President Carlenda Smith, MD; TNAAP VP Catherine Wiggleton, MD; TNAAP Executive Director Ruth Allen



Member Reception at the 2024 National AAP Conference & Exhibition in Orlando

AAP ORLANDO
experience 2024
National Conference & Exhibition

AAP NATIONAL CONFERENCE

TNAAP's Endowment Fund sponsored two residents. Read about their experiences below:

My experience at the AAP National Convention was truly a dream come true! From broadening my pediatric knowledge with helpful sessions about updated management and guidelines in illnesses to formative networking that allowed me to walk away from the conference with a number of mentors from across the country, I feel the conference has truly blessed me with an opportunity that I cannot say thank you enough for! I was able to find solidarity in fellow trainees in Pediatrics and Med-Peds who will serve as friends and colleagues that I will have for all of my career. Overall, my experience is one that I will always remember as a true formative moment in my residency and lifelong career and I thank the TNAAP for offering me the opportunity to experience it.

Robert Tatum, Jr., MD | University of Tennessee Health Science Center



As I reflect on my time at the AAP NCE, one word keeps coming to mind: community. The AAP NCE fostered a strong sense of collaboration and shared purpose as we explored these advancements in pediatric care together. I am grateful for TNAAP for sponsoring me and allowing me to engage with colleagues who are as passionate about improving the lives of children and adolescents as I am. This sense of community not only enriched my professional knowledge but deepened my appreciation for the collaborative, multidisciplinary nature of pediatric care. The experience was a powerful reminder that, while we may practice in different regions and focus on varied subspecialties, we are all united by a common goal: to advocate for and improve the health of children everywhere. One of the highlights of my experience was interacting with pediatricians from my home country, Egypt!

Mark Naguib, MD | Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt



2024 AAP ADVOCACY CONFERENCE



TNAAP sponsored two residents to attend and learn from the AAP Advocacy Conference in Washington D.C.

TNAAP President Carlenda Smith, MD is pictured with Edson Ruiz MD, University of Tennessee Health Science Center Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine and Victoria L. Carr, MD, Pediatrics Resident Physician, Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital. Read about their experiences below.



As experts in child care, our opinions carry significant weight when it comes to influencing those who represent us and make decisions about laws and budgets that affect our daily practices and the well-being of our patients. During my time in DC, I shared thoughts and stories with people from different backgrounds and different types of practice. After building up confidence and acquiring knowledge from the experts, I felt ready to be an effective advocate and speak on our children's behalf. The last day of the conference was one of the best experiences of my life. We went to Capitol Hill and had the chance to speak directly to state representatives. I shared stories that could promote positive change for our patients, and I even volunteered as an expert in child health to answer any questions those representatives may have had. I believe our message was impactful and that new policies will soon be implemented to protect and promote the well-being of children. I learned as pediatricians, we are all advocates. It is in our nature. Our daily experiences and knowledge are valuable as we have powerful stories that can create impact and need to be heard. You are not alone. There are allies all over (state chapters of the AAP), but you might not be aware. It's a marathon, not a sprint. It takes a team for the message to spread and be heard. Be patient and follow up with those who heard your message.

Edson Ruiz MD, PGY-6 | University of Tennessee Health Science Center



This conference was a wonderful opportunity to learn important advocacy skills and network with other like-minded residents and practicing physician-advocates. A common theme of the conference was the power of our stories and focusing on our "north star" as pediatricians, which has always been the health and wellbeing of children. Through numerous workshops and talks on advocacy; we often reflected on how pediatricians are trusted voices in our communities and uniquely seated to build consensus. We then took our training to practice by meeting with legislators on Capitol Hill to discuss bipartisan legislation around important child health priorities. With other attendees from Tennessee, we met with staffers and elected officials in the offices of our senators and representatives to discuss the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA) and the need to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Services for Children program. I am grateful for TNAAP's support in allowing me to attend the conference and would highly recommend it to anyone interested in becoming more engaged with advocacy.

Victoria L. Carr, MD, PGY-2 | Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital



PAYER ADVOCACY

TNAAP'S PEDIATRIC COUNCIL

- Worked with TennCare MCOs to ensure codes and fees were loaded for new Beyfortus and Covid vaccine administration codes
- Provided updates on Change Health cyberattack
- Gathered information on Medicaid fee schedules in other states, surveyed members about their TennCare participation, and identified strategies to promote Medicare/Medicaid parity payment in Tennessee.
- Worked with MCOs to improve translation services
- Worked with BlueCross to make sure appropriate CPT codes were loaded for trivalent flu vaccine

Convincing payers to remove inappropriate edits and claims denials

Addressing inappropriate prior authorization requirements

Advocating for coverage of certain services and CPT codes

Halting payer audits and recoupments

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR THE WHOLE PRACTICE!

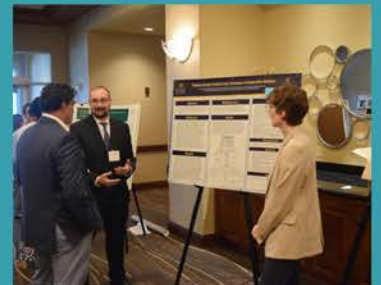
TNAAP welcomed both in-person attendees and 30 virtual participants to our annual **Pediatric Practice Management Conference**, held as a hybrid live event for the first time. Our slate of speakers covered topics important to office operations, including responding to claim denials, finding "missing" patients on your panel, and common HR pitfalls. The keynote by Beth Ziesenis (a self-proclaimed "nerdy best friend") took our audience to the cutting edge of AI used in clinical environments.



The 2024 **Tennessee State Pediatric Conference** was held in Franklin in August, with a focus on behavioral health from birth through adolescents. Speakers explored topics including how early experiences shape mental health in children, models for integrating behavioral health into primary care, and new state data on adverse childhood experiences. We had 23 residents and students present their abstracts during the reception. **Jacob Ricketts, MA, MS-2** won Best Poster Award for Quality Improvement/Research and **Elizabeth Acevedo Zapata, MD** won Best Poster Award for Case Report.

The conference also included the 2024 Excellence in Pediatrics Awards, honoring:

- Pediatrician of the Year **Suzanne Berman, MD** (Crossville)
- Senior Pediatrician of the Year **Jennifer Najjar Leeper, MD** (Nashville)
- Friend of Children **Melanie Bull & Jim Schmidt** (Nashville)
- AAP Special Achievement Award **Barbara Dentz, MD & Dorothy Sinard, MD** (Nashville)



REGIONAL MEMBER MIXERS

In 2024, we held 3 networking mixers across the state. Our first mixer took place in Nashville at Diskin Cider on March 28 for an evening of appetizers, drinks and networking. We traveled west for our second mixer in Memphis at Belle Meade Social on May 30. Our final mixer took place at OddStory Brewing Company in Chattanooga in June.



PRACTICE MANAGEMENT POWER HOUR

Our EPSDT and Coding Program Manager, Janet Sutton, and Practice Management Quality Coach, Trudy Williams, traveled to Maryville, TN for our first Practice Management Power Hour Luncheon. They met with Practice Managers in East Tennessee to share updates on medical billing and other resources for clinics.



TNAAP PROGRAMS HAVE MEASURABLE SUCCESS!!



EPSDT and Coding

- Office Support/Consults (audits, assistance with coding issues such as modifier usage, MCO problems, telehealth, EPSDT, etc.) – 109 practices - 127 participants
- Virtual/Office Trainings and Regional Events – 222 Practices - 482 attendees
- The regional trainings included annual coding updates delivered in person in 4 areas of the state as well as a virtual option
- EPSDT and Coding Webinar – 269 views



Janet Sutton leads regional EPSDT trainings across Tennessee



Immunization Program

TNAAP's Immunization Program completed its second cohort of individuals in the Immunization ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes). This learning collaborative included renowned content experts who spearheaded nine peer-to-peer learning sessions with a total of 250 participants.



ECHO topics

- Addressing Declining Immunization Rates
- Quality Improvement
- Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy
- Coding
- Best Practices for Influenza
- Conducting Drive-Thru Flu Clinics
- Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy in Disparate Populations
- HPV

TNAAP expanded our online presence and developed a social media toolkit for members incorporating graphics and other resources to use in promotion of immunizations in their practices.

Three staff training sessions were attended by 153 participants.

Ten practices participated in the Immunization Quality Improvement Project eligible for MOC Part IV credit.



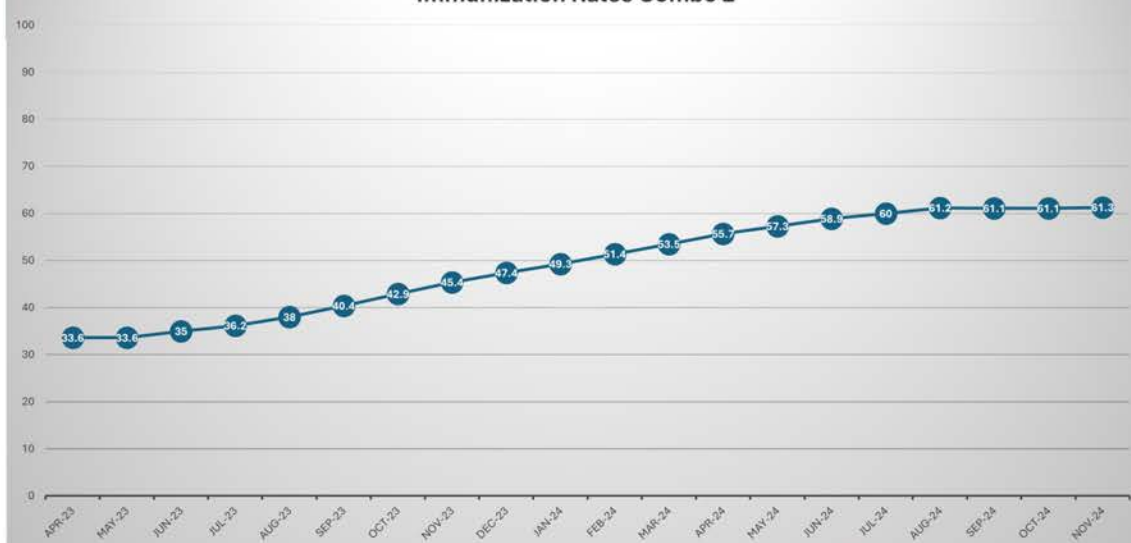
Screening Tools and Referral Training

- Trained 1219 participants through 30 individual trainings
- As part of TEIS's Child Find efforts, TNAAP's Program Manager paired up with Tennessee Early Intervention System district administrators and eligibility coordinators and conducted 45 visits to practices in counties with low referral rates in each of the 9 TEIS districts
- During these visits, information about TEIS referral process was shared along with information about the TEIS extended option



Susan Rollyson introduces a START training

Immunization Rates Combo 2





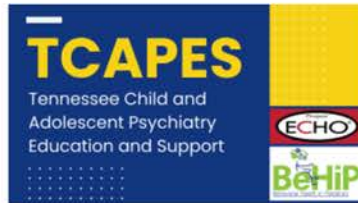
Behavioral Health in Pediatrics (BeHiP)

- BeHiP Office-Based Resident/Student Trainings – 11 sessions with 165 participants
- BeHiP FCMH ECHO – 11 sessions with 134 participants
- BeHiP Foster Care Medical Home ECHOs – 11 sessions with 134 participants
- Online Learning Modules - 172 CME credits claimed



Topics Covered:

- Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)
- Behavioral Health Coding and Workflow
- Exploring Trauma - Informed Care Throughout the Healthcare System
- Quality Improvement - MOC Part 4
- Suicide Prevention for Pediatric Medical Providers
- And five sessions reviewing the Basic Science Mount Sinai Parenting Center Keystones



- TCAPES Regional Trainings – 3 sessions with 29 participants
- TCAPES ECHO – 6 sessions with 104 participants

Topics included:

- Pharmacology of Psychiatric Comorbidities in Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Behavioral Approach to Disruptive Preschoolers
- Eating Disorders
- Sleep Disorders, Substance Use & Misuse



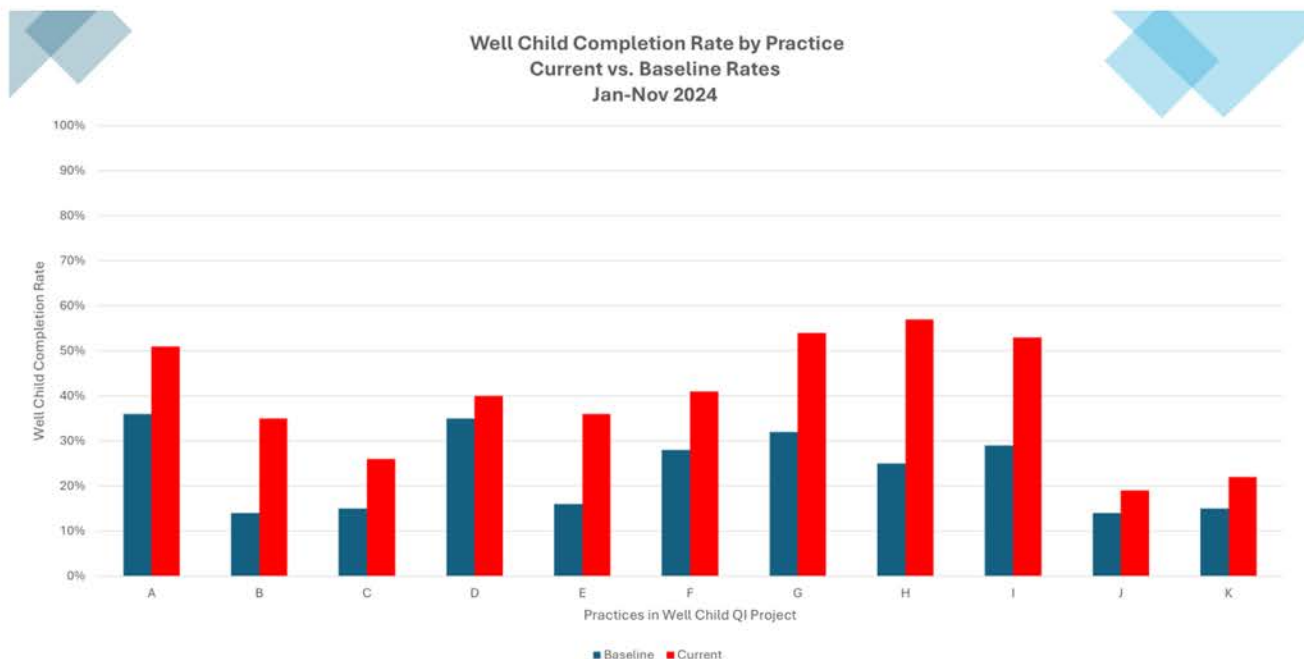
Practice Management Quality Coaching

- 506 attendees participated in Practice Management Coaching Sessions and Quality Improvement/EPSDT trainings
- 11 targeted practices increased well child rates by an average of 16% by participating in the quality improvement Program over 9 months with some improving as much as 32%
- 12 pediatricians and 7 family physicians earned 475 Maintenance of Certification (MOC) credits for their participation



Quality Improvement Trainings (Grand Total)

- Well Care QI Project: 15 clinics and 45 providers
- Immunization QI Project: 10 clinics and 259 providers
- START QI Project: 1 clinic and 6 providers
- BeHiP QI Project: 6 clinics and 107 providers
- 30 physicians were awarded a total of 750 MOC Part IV credits



CHAPTER FINANCIAL RESULTS

Year Ended June 30, 2024

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Grants	\$ 1,261,494	84%
Membership Dues	120,841	8%
Sponsorships & Other Income	124,446	8%
Total Revenue	\$ 1,506,781	

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$ 1,170,456	86%
Management & General	128,762	10%
Fundraising	55,161	4%
Total Expenses	\$ 1,354,379	
Change in Net Assets	\$ 152,402	

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assets	\$ 1,125,508
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Liabilities	\$ 175,276
Net Assets	950,232
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 1,125,508

ENDOWMENT FUND

Balance as of June 30, 2024	\$ 145,490
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Calendar Year 2024 General Fund Contributors

Helen Beeman, MD
Dorothy Sinard, MD*
Barbara Dentz, MD*
Jason Yaun, MD
Catherine Wiggleton, MD
Gayatri Jaishankar, MD

Endowment Fund Contributors

TNAAP*
Blake Bergeron, MD
Carlenda Smith, MD

*Major Donor - \$1,000 or more

Creating a Legacy for Future Pediatricians: TNAAP's Endowment Fund

This endowment continues to help fulfill TNAAP's mission by supporting TNAAP's long-term educational, advocacy and quality improvement programs. The fund was established in 2020 by the late Stuart T. Weinberg, MD. Contributions to the endowment also support the chapter over the long-term by increasing future annual distributions for tomorrow's pediatricians. Annual distributions of the TNAAP endowment fund are used to support members in various ways. The first year we provided a media training series, the second year we sponsored a resident to attend the AAP National Conference and Exhibition. The 2024 distribution of \$2,188 was used to sponsor two residents to attend the AAP National Conference and Exhibition (see what they had to say on page 7 of this report!)

Equip

Eating disorder treatment that works—delivered at home



Multidisciplinary care team



Evidence-based FBT treatment



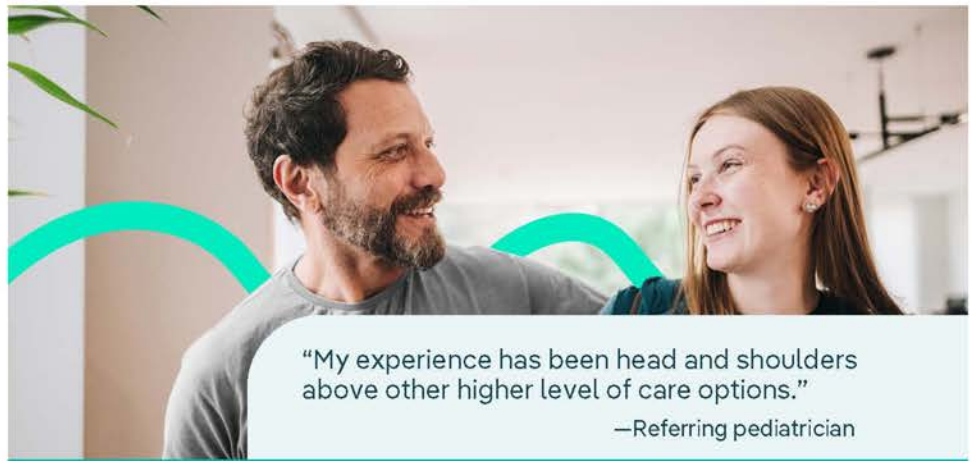
Virtual by design



Covered by insurance



Treating all ages & diagnoses, including ARFID



"My experience has been head and shoulders above other higher level of care options."

—Referring pediatrician

Patients see a 37% decrease in eating disorder behaviors after just 8 weeks.

Ready to refer a patient?

Scan the QR code or visit equip.health/providers-info to get started.

Have questions?

Connect with your clinical partnership representative, Anna Bible.
abible@equip.health | 865-738-7479



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Elaine Riley, BeHiP Program Consultant
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Amber Stroupe, BeHiP Program Manager
Janet Sutton, EPSDT and Coding Program Manager
Samantha Williams, Immunization Program Manager
Trudy Williams, Practice Management Quality Coach

