

Increasing a local nonprofit's capacity for health

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Montana AAP pediatricians show support for child health bills during their annual White Coat Day in the Montana Capitol

Background

The Montana Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics (MTAAP) is a small chapter of approximately 100 pediatricians. Their nonprofit focuses on three areas of child health issues:



- Mental Health
- Injury and violence prevention
- Immunizations

Mental Health—Montana has the highest suicide rate in the country, twice the national average. Our state has had one of the top five suicide rates for more than thirty years.

For Montana children ages 10-14, suicide is the number two cause of death. Youth suicides are completed by firearms 75% of the time.

Injury and violence prevention—As of 2016, Montana is the only state in the nation without a law to prevent distracted driving.

Immunizations—Montana had the lowest rate of childhood immunizations in the country three years ago. Our state now ranks 41st through continued efforts.

In the past 12 months, MTAAP has increased their chapter's legislative initiative significantly. Their texting and driving bill was the first their chapter had sponsored in over 10 years.

However, the nonprofit employs only one part-time staff member, limiting increased legislative involvement.



MTAAP has testified on four bills during the last state legislative session

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to create a well designed, thoroughly researched child health booklet in order to inform state legislators about the most crucial health issues facing children and families in Montana.

The ultimate research goal is to determine how MTAAP can better direct resources and educate policy makers through use of existing data on child welfare.

The booklet will serve as a reference for decision makers and a connection to MTAAP in the absence of pediatrician/policy maker direct contact.



Methods

Project research was focused in three areas:

1. Determine the effect of a child health booklet for an AAP chapter and their state
2. Determine how MTAAP's child health expertise can be most effectively communicated using the booklet
3. Determine what Montana child health issues should be discussed in the booklet and the most recent and relevant data regarding the issues



Actual size of child health booklet MTAAP hopes to emulate

Research was gathered from within MTAAP, other AAP state chapters, the national AAP organization, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Montana KIDS COUNT, the state legislative website and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Information from these sources was analyzed and interpreted for use in the booklet.

Further communication research was gathered from the book "Made to Stick," written by educators and idea collectors to make worthy ideas "stickier."

Discussion

The New Jersey Chapter of AAP, the only chapter currently using a child health booklet, reported only positive effects from distributing their booklet to the entire state Legislature.

Before the booklet was implemented, it was a rarity for legislators to reach out to the AAP chapter, but they now regularly contact chapter pediatricians for advice regarding child health.

Montana has many significant child health issues. This project has the potential to increase contact between state legislators and the MTAAP nonprofit, thereby making child health expertise more readily available to decision-makers. **MTAAP's legislative involvement is currently limited by the organization's size, but the child health booklet created by this project will increase the nonprofit's capacity for health.**

Resources

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
• <https://dphhs.mt.gov/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
• <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/suicide/>

United Health Foundation
• <http://www.americashealthrankings.org/MT>

Montana KIDS COUNT
• <http://www.montanakidscount.org/>

"Made to Stick," Dan and Chip Heath

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American Academy of Pediatrics
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Montana Chapter



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