



News Release

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS PRAISES CONGRESSIONAL PASSAGE OF PEPFAR, SAYING IT WILL HELP CHILDREN WORLDWIDE

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) applauds Congress for passing far-reaching legislation that will protect hundreds of thousands of infants and children worldwide from HIV/AIDS, as well as provide needed treatment and support for those already affected by the disease.

“In the United States, HIV-positive children have a fighting chance to survive into adulthood thanks to access to effective treatment,” says AAP President Renée R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP. “We also have made great progress in preventing mothers who are HIV-positive from passing the virus on to their infants. Children around the world, and their moms, deserve the same chance. They deserve to not only dream of a future, but live it. This legislation to reauthorize the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) will give them that chance.”

In specific, the bill, which reauthorizes PEPFAR for five years, will help children by:

- * Increasing the number of HIV-positive children receiving antiretroviral drug therapy;
- * Bolstering treatment programs for pregnant women to help prevent the transmission of the virus during pregnancy, birth or breastfeeding;
- * Expand programs that care for children orphaned by, affected by or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS;

The AAP has strived to break down barriers to HIV prevention and treatment for children worldwide. (For AAP’s 2007 policy statement and recommendations, please go to: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/> and search for “Increasing Antiretroviral Drug Access for Children with HIV Infection.”)

“Nearly half a million children are infected with HIV every year and yet, in the past, children have not gotten their fair share of U.S.-backed HIV/AIDS treatment services,” Jenkins said. “Without help, half die before their second birthday. We now have a powerful tool to fight the international HIV/AIDS epidemic and make sure children throughout the world have a chance for happy, productive lives.”

Jenkins also praised President Bush’s support for the PEPFAR reauthorization and urged him to swiftly sign it into law. “Through this law, our political leaders have shown the world we care about children and their future.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.