

**American Academy of Pediatrics
Council on Community Pediatrics
Rural Health Special Interest Group**

August 2005

NDAAP Rural Health Child Advocacy

Kurt Kooyer, MD, serves on the Rural Health Steering Committee, Special Interest Group (RHSIG), [is a practicing rural pediatrician in ND](#), and also on the board of directors for the Red River Children's Advocacy Center in Fargo, ND. Dr Kooyer is presenting our RH ListServ discussion, [North Dakota Rural Child Health Advocacy](#) for the month of August 2005.

Introduction:

Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) are community-based partnerships which bring together professionals from child protective services, law enforcement, prosecution, the medical and mental health communities, and others, to investigate and intervene in cases of suspected child abuse. [While typically in urban areas, North Dakota has established two CACs servicing the entire rural state](#) These centers take the lead in initiating investigations and provide a safe, child friendly environment where the child is interviewed-generally just once-by a trained forensic interviewer (team members from law enforcement, prosecution, social services, protective services, and the medical and mental health fields watch and contribute from another room via closed circuit television).

The Issue:

Many stories of how a CAC has made a difference in the investigation of child abuse-and the life of a child-have emerged. If you have stories regarding your experience with a Children's Advocacy Center you would like to share with the SIG, please do so. If you don't have access to a CAC but would be interested in learning more, or even beginning the process for establishing one in your area, the NCA web page is a good place to start (www.nca-online.com).