executive summary

The 2024 Washington State legislative session was a banner year for the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics as members and partners raised our collective voice to advocate for the health and well-being of children and families. Bolstered by our highly engaged Legislative Committee, year-round efforts to teach and engage WCAAP members in advocacy resulted in strong, ongoing relationships between pediatric providers and their legislators. WCAAP members are consistently known as skilled, thoughtful advocates—a win for both our members and children and families.

2024 Priorities, Solutions, & Wins

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<tr>
<th>Improve children and teen behavioral health and help with families' financial needs</th>
<th>Improve child health and school success with daily access to healthy food</th>
<th>Update statute governing WA Universal Purchase for Immunizations</th>
<th>Prevent Gun Violence</th>
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<td>Fund Community Health Workers (CHWs) and care coordination for kids in primary care.</td>
<td>Provide funding to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to provide free school meals to all school-aged children (K-12) in WA.</td>
<td>Update the current statute’s definition of ‘vaccine’ to make it more inclusive of current and future immunization products.</td>
<td>Require a permit to purchase a firearm.</td>
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| Our top budget priority, funding CHWs and care coordination was included in the state’s supplemental budget! This will:  
  - Pay for existing pediatric CHW workforce through June 2025  
  - Instruct the Health Care Authority (HCA) to establish a CHW benefit under Medicaid using any available federal funds  
  - Increase rates sufficient to provide care coordination for postnatal, child, and adolescent mental health screenings (beginning Jan. 2025)  
  - Direct HCA to apply to implement G0136 for health risk assessment benefit for children and families | The supplemental budget allocated $45M in new funding for school meals, which will allow the free school meals program to continue at its current level, providing tens of thousands of kids with no-cost, healthy meals during the school day. | Signed into law by Governor Inslee on March 13th, the update to this statute will ensure access to lifesaving immunizations, including Nirsevimab for protection against RSV, for all children in Washington. | While our full permit to purchase priority did not advance, we turned our support to advancing HB 2118 (additional requirements for licensed firearm dealers) and SB 5444 (restricting firearms in sensitive places), both of which passed, ensuring Washington’s place as a state leader in gun violence prevention legislation. |
WCAAP hosted our biggest Advocacy Day yet, with over 100 members, staff, and partners from 30 districts, who participated in over 50 in-person meetings with legislators and staff in Olympia.

- WCAAP members, parents, and CHWs testified in 47 bill and budget hearings.
- WCAAP members and partners sent messages to legislators in 39 of our 49 districts.
- WCAAP members offered their time and expertise to over 40 ‘support item’ bills, in addition to our top priorities, helping partners and legislators pass:
  - Establishment of the WA State Health Corps behavioral health scholarship program
  - Supporting youth following inpatient behavioral health treatment
  - Extending the crisis relief center model to provide behavioral health crisis services for minors
  - Expanding access to anaphylaxis medications in schools
  - Extending foster care services to youth ages 18 to 21
  - Eliminating child marriage
  - Providing fentanyl and other substance use prevention education
  - Funding opioid overdose reversal medication in high schools and colleges
  - Public education and guidance regarding high THC cannabis products

A more detailed list of our legislative wins this session can be found on our website at wcaap.org/advocacy.

This year, WCAAP honored Representative Lisa Callan with our 3rd Annual David Frockt Child Advocate Award. Previous awardees, former Senator David Frockt and Representative Paul Harris, were on hand to celebrate their colleague. As the Co-Chair of the Children & Behavioral Health Work Group, Representative Callan has helped lead Washington to increase mental health counseling rates and school-based mental health services, support perinatal mental health, improve resources for early childhood mental health and advance behavioral health integration in primary care. Representative Callan has also worked to ensure that youth and parents with lived experience help guide improvements and investments for kids’ mental health.
WCAAP member participation is crucial to our success. You have the credibility and expertise to advance meaningful change for the patients and families you serve and improve the health and well-being of all children in our state.

Join us!

- Become a member (if you aren’t already) at wcaap.org/membership
- Make a donation to support our advocacy efforts: wcaap.org/donate
- Sign up to get Action Alerts right to your phone! Learn more at wcaap.org/advocacy
- Attend a Legislative Committee Meeting, held the first Tuesday of every month. Email ejackson@wcaap.org for details.
- Join us in Olympia for Advocacy Day 2025: Monday, January 27th. Register now at wcaap.org/advocacy

The Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.