



Principles for Health Care Reform

The American Society of Pediatric Nephrology (ASPEN) is an organization of pediatric nephrologists and affiliated health care professionals. Our primary goals are to promote optimal care for children with kidney disease through advocacy, education and research, as well as to disseminate advances in clinical practice and scientific investigation related to childhood kidney and urinary tract disorders. Pediatric nephrologists in North America are a diverse and active group of academic pediatric nephrologists and practitioners, pediatric department chairmen, medical school deans, and physicians employed in the pharmaceutical or biotechnology industry. Pediatric nephrologists are clinicians, basic scientists, clinical and translational researchers, and advocates for pediatric patients with kidney disease. Regardless of their primary activity, pediatric nephrologists in North America are likely to serve in some capacity as a clinician, teacher, researcher, and mentor to future pediatric nephrologists.

With health care reform at the top of the 111th Congress' agenda, the ASPEN outlines several key principles supporting the fundamental proposition that health care reform must focus first on the patient's needs and recognize that good health begins during childhood:

- Health care reform should expand coverage for children, so that no child with chronic kidney disease (CKD) lacks access to specialized pediatric renal medical care.
- Health care reform should focus on prevention, including identification of pre-hypertension in children and early intervention for childhood obesity, to delay and ultimately avoid development of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease in adults.
- Health care reform should ensure better quality of care for the pediatric population.
- Access to care cannot be accomplished without an adequate physician workforce. Pediatric subspecialties face a workforce shortage that threatens patients' access to and quality of care outlined above. Health care reform must include efforts to improve recruitment and retention of physicians in the fields of pediatrics and pediatric subspecialties to better meet the health care needs of our children.