

# Pediatricians' group tackles racism in health care

8 October 2020, by Dennis Thompson, Healthday Reporter



this nation, whether it be the overt violent acts we see on TV or sometimes the more subtle messages of having a person of color perhaps always be the bad guy on TV shows."

Access to care for [low-income](#) and minority kids is a central concern in the upcoming elections, Murray added.

"We need to continue the Medicaid funding and the Child Health Insurance Program [CHIP]," Murray said. "Preventive care far and wide saves money on the back end. If we don't have access to routine [preventive care](#), we are going to have a sicker population.

"Children are about 25% of the population, but we know they are also 100% of the future, so we need to make sure we're taking care of them now," Murray continued.

(HealthDay)—As the struggle against racism continues to simmer across the United States, the American Academy of Pediatrics took a hard look at racial gaps in health care for children during its recent annual meeting.

"We know racism is a social determinant of health, and it's a public health issue, so we spent a great deal of time focusing on that," Dr. Elizabeth Murray, a pediatrician with the University of Rochester Medical Center, said during a recent [HD Live!](#) interview.

Pediatricians need to become more aware of how racism affects both the physical and mental health of [children](#), said Murray, a spokesperson for the academy.

"We need to talk about racism and learn how to be anti-racist, and that we all have work to do," Murray said. "We also need to identify the traumas that are experienced by children and people of color as happening on a regular basis throughout

The AAP meeting, held Oct. 2-5 and attended in virtual space by more than 14,000 people, also touched on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected children's health.

"We at the AAP would very much like to ensure that any COVID vaccine be tested and studied on children as well, because they're part of the population who will certainly at some point need to be vaccinated," Murray said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, warned during a speech at the meeting that approval of a COVID vaccine will not suddenly end the pandemic.

"His point was really to stress that a vaccine is not magic," Murray said. "It's not going to be the thing that finally makes it all of a sudden go away. We still will have lots of work to do because of the potential months to years it will take to then roll out a vaccine, once we have proven one to be safe."

In the meantime, people will have to continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, engage in good hand hygiene, and follow all the other infection prevention measures that have been touted by public health officials, Murray said.

Pediatricians have been doing their part to ensure patient safety during the pandemic. Kids can get their shots at drive-through vaccination clinics in some places, Murray said. Other clinics bring sick kids in for visits early in the day and then deep-clean the entire office before having well-child checkups later.

"Throughout all of this, there has been a very clear call that the well-child checks, especially for the younger children, must continue, because they're just so important to the overall [health](#) of the child," Murray said.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics has more about [discussing racism with children](#).

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