AMCHP POSITION ON TREATMENT OF IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Based closely upon the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs maintains the following positions on the treatment of immigrant children.

- Children should not be detained; no amount of detention is safe for a child. According to the AAP, even short periods of detention can cause psychological trauma and long-term mental health risks. Research demonstrates that psychological trauma can be passed along to future generations.
- Children should never be separated from their parents or caregivers unless a competent family court determines it.
- Children fleeing violence have a right to seek asylum in the United States.
- At a minimum, children must be guaranteed basic humanitarian standards when they are in federal custody.
- All Customs and Border Protection (CBP) facilities that hold children must provide adequate medical care, shelter, developmentally appropriate education and play; adequate nutrition, including clean drinking water, infant formula and baby food; access to hygiene, including daily showers and frequent handwashing; access to essential items like diapers and feminine hygiene products.
- The Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement should be adequately funded to care and provide appropriate post-release services for unaccompanied children.
- Special attention must be given to meeting the needs of children and youth with special health care needs. Facilities should have access to proper accommodations, equipment and supplies; and medical care should include any needed diagnosis, evaluation, and connection to specialty care, services, or programs.

***According to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, “child” is defined as under 18 years of age.