

POLICY & PRACTICE

New VP at AAP Eyes Disparity Issues

The new vice president of the American Academy of Pediatrics intends to work with its leadership on a comprehensive national agenda for "optimal child health and development," which includes addressing ethnic and minority child health disparities, she said in an interview. Dr. Renee Jenkins chairs the department of pediatrics and child health at Howard University and is professor of pediatrics at George Washington University, both in Washington. Dr. Jenkins defeated Dr. O. Marion Burton of the University of South

Carolina, Columbia. The number of votes per candidate was not given, but the total number cast was 13,335, Dr. Jenkins said. Dr. Jenkins, who also has a special interest in adolescent health and underserved children, will become the president-elect in October and will serve as the 2007-2008 AAP president.

AMA: Ensure Flu Vaccine Supply

Physicians at the annual meeting of the American Medical Association's House of Delegates voiced their frustration with the uneven supply and distribution of in-

fluenza vaccine that have become commonplace in recent years. AMA delegates approved a resolution instructing the AMA leadership to "vigorously" work to ensure that an adequate supply of every manufacturer's vaccine is sold directly to health care providers who are immunizing high-priority patients, as defined by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. The resolution also calls on manufacturers and distributors of influenza vaccine to provide a dedicated ordering system for small- and medium-sized practices to preorder vaccine up to a certain amount. The delegates also instructed the AMA to prepare a report ed-

ucating physicians about the influenza vaccine supply and distribution process. "We must develop a more streamlined process for getting influenza vaccine into the hands of physicians to help patients become vaccinated," Dr. Ronald M. Davis, AMA president-elect, said in a statement.

AAP Urges Ban on ATV Use by Kids

The American Academy of Pediatrics has criticized the Consumer Product Safety Commission for failing to propose a ban on all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use by children under 16 years of age. CPSC commissioners were briefed by agency staff in June; staff members outlined regulatory options such as keeping children away from adult ATVs and directing them instead to smaller youth ATVs with speeds that can be restricted to as low as 10 mph. In a statement, the AAP called CPSC's staff report "another ineffective effort by the agency to reduce the risk of child injury and death associated with ATVs," adding that other steps, such as a driver's license, should be required. "ATV crashes killed 130 children and sent 44,700 more to emergency departments in 2004," the statement said. The CPSC has not yet decided whether to take the more definite step of proposing a rule.

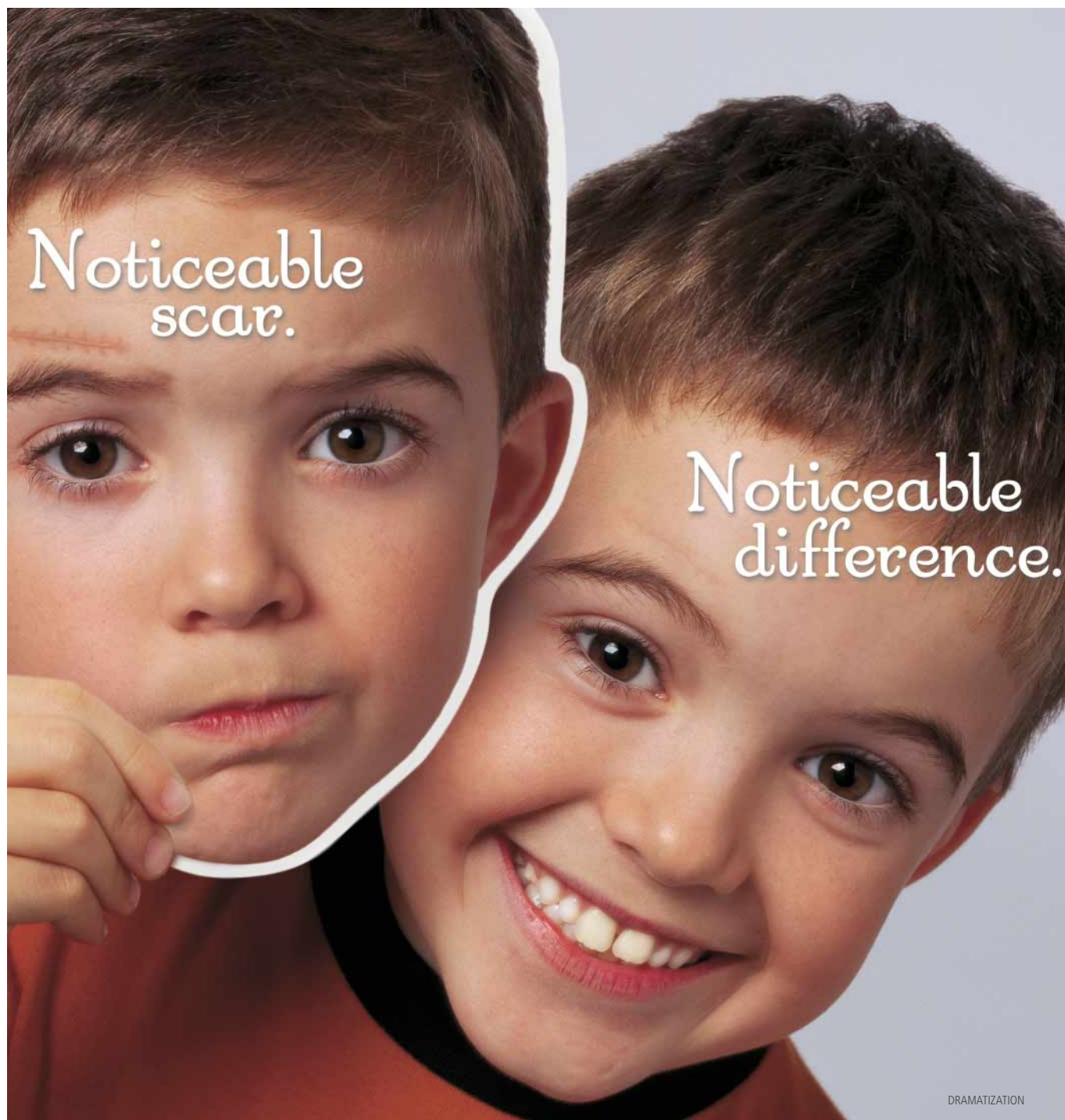
Genome Project for Common Diseases

A major children's hospital is launching a genome project to develop treatments for asthma, obesity, diabetes, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other common childhood diseases, as well as pediatric cancer. The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) will start with patients in its own hospital network, said Dr. Hakon Hakonarson, who is leading the new Center for Applied Genomics. Multiple layers of encryption will be used on patient Social Security numbers to protect confidentiality. Dr. Hakonarson added that pediatricians outside of CHOP with a "keen interest" in the work would also be eligible to participate. "The goal is to network this [project] worldwide," he said in an interview. CHOP plans to have the center up and running by September, with the initial work on neuroblastoma, Dr. Hakonarson said. The center plans to analyze blood samples from more than 100,000 children during the next 3 years.

E-Records Enhance Asthma Care

Electronic medical records can enable physicians to keep in touch with asthmatic patients and may help reduce hospitalizations, according to Dr. Elmer Martin, formerly of Cincinnati Group Health Associates. Pediatricians at CGHA, a multi-specialty group of more than 100 physicians in the Cincinnati area, each developed their own electronic patient rosters for moderate to severe asthmatics and updated them annually. CGHA providers and staff used letters and phone calls to contact patients periodically and check medicine compliance; they also encouraged influenza vaccination. The vaccination rate in this patient group increased from 8.7% in 2001 to 42.7% in 2003. In addition, the CGHA yearly pediatric hospital admissions for asthma declined by 50% from 2001 to 2003. The study appeared in the April issue of *Clinical Pediatrics*.

—Nancy Nickell



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