



The Federation of Pediatric Organizations Strategic Plan: Six Strategic Initiatives to Enhance Child Health

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The Federation of Pediatric Organizations (FOPO) is now in its tenth year of incorporation as an umbrella organization for 7 pediatric organizations—the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), the Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs (AMSPDC), the Academic Pediatric Association (APA), the Association of Pediatric Program Directors (APPD), the American Pediatric Society, and the Society for Pediatric Research. FOPO has been an important forum for the leadership of member organizations to vet issues that broadly impact the pediatrics community.¹ In July 2007, the Board of Directors of FOPO met at the AAP headquarters to develop the first formal strategic plan of the organization for the next 5 years.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The AAP kindly provided the services of Kenneth M. Slaw, PhD, Director of the Department of Membership and Director of Strategic Planning Initiatives of the AAP, to facilitate the strategic planning process. Before the meeting, Slaw completed a phone interview with at least one representative from each FOPO organization. Participants then completed a series of reflective exercises to focus their thinking about the purpose of FOPO, the needs of its constituency organizations, opportunities and threats in the present and future environment, and the desired outcomes. This prework was an essential part of the process, provided insight about where consensus existed, and allowed the planning group to save considerable time.

The group quickly arrived at consensus around two important mission elements. First, the greatest purpose of FOPO is to enhance child health; thus it was agreed that all activities must align to this primary mission. Second, the primary constituencies of FOPO are its member organizations and other organizations that constitute the profession of pediatrics. As such, the group agreed that all issues considered by FOPO should align in a meaningful way to advance the

profession. There was also agreement that priority issues undertaken by FOPO should cut across several FOPO member organizations, tend to be beyond the scope of any one member organization, and be actionable with implementation plans that are realistic and achievable.

The group also established an operating agreement that outlined expectations once an issue is brought to FOPO. The expectation is that FOPO will discuss and analyze the issue, think collaboratively and innovatively, reach out to other organizations, facilitate external discussion, and drive toward achievable solutions.

SIX STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Drawing from a list of desirable outcomes that emerged from the prework exercises, working groups engaged in brainstorming and prioritization exercises that resulted in 6 strategic initiatives.

Develop a Leadership Academy in Pediatrics

The planning group noted that a substantial strategy to advance the profession and, in turn, enhance child health, is to ensure that pediatricians have access to programs that will allow them to lead effectively within their practices, institutions, and communities. Within FOPO organizations there is already a substantial effort in this arena. The Pediatric Leadership Alliance of the AAP has trained more than 400 individuals: AAP leadership, young physicians, and staff and members of liaison organizations. The APA hosted the first Pediatric Leadership Conference, focusing on academic general pediatricians. APPD and AMSPDC incorporated strategies for leadership training into their strategic plans to enhance the executive administrative function of program directors and department chairs. Under the FOPO umbrella, this initiative will facilitate a coordinated effort across organizations to promote the acquisition of skills necessary to create pediatric leaders.

Position Pediatricians as Leaders within Organized Medicine

Related to the development of pediatric leaders is the need for pediatricians to occupy positions of leadership in organized medicine. Because pediatrics will always be a mi-

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nority compared with other specialty fields such as medicine and surgery, the positioning of pediatricians as leaders in medicine is strategic to the mission of enhancing child health. This initiative will require an understanding of the process of proposing and nominating individuals for these key positions within organized medicine. The FOPO Board of Directors will assist in identifying the organizations to target to achieve this strategic initiative.

Promote an Increase in Graduate Medical Education (GME) Funding and Understanding Best Practices of Funding GME

The issue of GME funding is complicated. The intent of this initiative is to examine current funding mechanisms with the understanding that future GME funding through governmental sources may be in jeopardy. FOPO envisions hosting an innovation conference in which the educational mission and the GME enterprise is examined from multiple points of view. This initiative will be a collaborative effort with representatives from other stakeholder organizations, including the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions and the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Enhance the Entire Child Health Research Agenda by Increasing Support for Pediatric Research

Despite the years of the doubling of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget, the percentage that was directed toward pediatric research declined. In addition, the number of pediatric physician-scientists has not increased sufficiently to provide the next generation of pediatric investigators. The goal is to identify the issues that impact the child health research agenda by convening a working group to report on the state of child health research and prioritize the actions needed to increase support for pediatric research. The group will consider sources of funding beyond the NIH including other governmental agencies and departments and key nongovernmental sources.

Establish the Global Child Health Priorities of Academic Pediatrics

The issue of global child health has been addressed by a variety of individual efforts at the institutional level or by nongovernmental organizations. FOPO intends to organize an effort nationally to establish the priority issues that align with the mission of member organizations and have broad appeal in the academic pediatric community. This initiative will be a collaborative project within pediatrics and with those groups already engaged in meaningful work on the global child health agenda.

Create a Position Statement Regarding Health Insurance for All Children and Youth in the United States

Providing adequate health insurance for all children and youth in the United States is a priority for FOPO. Issuing a

Position Statement will affirm the importance of the issue on behalf of the pediatric community that FOPO represents. The Position Statement will be vetted within each member organization, and a final version will be publicized in a timely fashion to potentially influence the political process surrounding the presidential election. By issuing this position statement, FOPO establishes itself as an organization that speaks with one voice for its member organizations and the pediatric community as a whole.

THE WORK AHEAD

Utilizing GAP analysis techniques the planning group examined each initiative to identify critical gaps between the current and desired state and determined the actions necessary to close those gaps. By considering two important dimensions, Mission/Impact and Ease of Implementation, a payoff matrix was generated (Table; available at www.jpeds.com). This matrix assists in staging the work toward achieving the strategic initiatives. As a result of this exercise, the position statement on health insurance was deemed the most opportune and will be the first initiative to be implemented.

As the planning group discussed implementation, Slaw emphasized the importance of ensuring success of the strategic plan by maintaining focus and avoiding trying to accomplish initiatives too broad in scope, assigning oversight and accountability within the leadership, and aligning resources and budget to the priorities.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan is ultimately the responsibility of the Executive Director of FOPO. However, members of the Board of Directors have already identified themselves as leaders for each of the strategic initiatives, and work is well underway on initiatives in member organizations. The activities of FOPO will also include items that were not on the final list but nonetheless represent core activities of FOPO historically and into the future. These activities include topics that relate to women in pediatrics brought forward by the FOPO Task Force on Women in Pediatrics and issues that will emerge from the activities of the ABP Residency Review and Redesign in Pediatrics Project.

This planning process represented a sea change for FOPO as an organization. There was a great sense of hope, expectation, and enthusiasm as a result of this planning process. It should be noted that groups rarely fail at planning. Implementation or execution of the plan is the primary challenge. It is the drive to achieve results that will ultimately fuel change and determine the success of the planning process and of FOPO in its effort to enhance child health.

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1. Behrman RE. FOPO, FOPE II, and the future. *J Pediatr* 2007;150:1-2.

Table. Payoff matrix

Strategic initiative	Mission/Impact		Ease of implementation	
	1 → 10	Low → High	1 → 10	Hard → Easy
Leadership academy	5	Medium	7	Easier
Pediatricians in leadership positions	8	High	6	Medium
Increase GME funding	9+	High	1-2	Harder
Increase research funding	9+	High	1-2	Harder
Global health	4	Medium	5	Medium
Health insurance for all children	8	High	4	Hard