

HOPE for Transformative Policy

A. Engagement of the Pediatric Community:

Preventing Childhood Toxic Stress: Partnering with Family and Communities to Promote Relational Health, August 2021

Urged governmental, institutional and academic leaders to identify and address the effects of trauma on children, families, and their health care providers;

“The most fundamental adaptational mechanism for any child is a secure relationship with a safe, stable, nurturing adult who is continuous over time in the child’s life..... Physiology, in addition to psychology, is affected by protective relationships.”

Early Relational Health (IMH) is a 2024 AAP priority.

B. ***United States Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy’s Advisory*** May 2023 calls attention to the public health crisis of loneliness, isolation, and lack of connection in our country. The Advisory lays out a framework for the United States to establish a National Strategy to Advance Social Connection that among others calls for Public Policy to support and enable more connection amongst families and communities. <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2023/05/03/new-surgeon-general-advisory-raises-alarm-about-devastating-impact-epidemic-loneliness-isolation-united-states.html>

1. **Strengthen Social Infrastructure:** To strengthen social infrastructure, communities must design environments that promote connection, establish and scale community connection programs, and invest in institutions that bring people together.
2. **Enact Pro-Connection Public Policies:** National, state, local, and tribal governments play a role in establishing policies like accessible public transportation or paid family leave that can support and enable more connection among a community or a family.
3. **Mobilize the Health Sector:** Because loneliness and isolation are risk factors for several major health conditions (including heart disease, dementia, depression) as well as for premature death, health care providers are well-positioned to assess patients for risk of loneliness and intervene.
4. **Reform Digital Environments:** We must critically evaluate our relationship with technology and ensure that how we interact digitally does not detract from meaningful and healing connection with others.
5. **Deepen Our Knowledge:** A more robust research agenda, beyond the evidence outlined in the advisory, must be established to further our understanding of the causes and consequences of social disconnection, populations at risk, and the effectiveness of efforts to boost connection.

6. Cultivate a Culture of Connection: The informal practices of everyday life (the norms and culture of how we engage one another) significantly influence the relationships we have in our lives. We cannot be successful in the other pillars without a culture of connection.

C. **The Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap** published last summer is grounded in reviews of science and is designed to provide guidance to state leaders on the most effective investments states can make to ensure all children thrive from the start. <https://pn3policy.org/>

1. State-level policies that support family economic security and mobility for two-generational success include the following:
 - Paid Family Leave of at Least 6 Weeks (9 states)
 - State Minimum Wage of \$10 or Greater (29 states)
 - Refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit at Least 10 percent (28 states)
 - Child Tax Credits (8 states)
 - Reduced Administrative Burden for SNAP (33 states including TN)
2. It also calls for increased investments to scale and spread a range of promotion, prevention, and intervention services supporting families' foundational relationships.
 - Extended Postpartum Medicaid Eligibility (37 states including TN)
 - Developmental Health and Connection Programs (26 states)
 - Group Prenatal and Parenting Care Programs (44 states including TN)
3. Policies that support the development of a diverse and well-trained relational workforce.
 - Medicaid Financing for Doulas (10 states)
 - Medicaid Financing for Community Health Workers (29 states)
4. Increased financing to accelerate the use of high performing medical homes (Primary Care)
 - Supplemental Payment for Child Social-Emotional Screenings (17 states)
 - Supplemental Payment for Maternal and/or Parental Depression Screening (25 states)
 - Supplemental Payment for Social Determinants of Health Screenings (4 states)

D. **Campaign for Trauma Informed Policy and Practice** is building a national movement that integrates community-led, trauma-informed, resilience- focused, and healing-centered prevention and intervention through coalition-building, advocacy, and policymaking so that everyone has the support and opportunity to thrive.

1. The RISE from Trauma Act ([S. 1426](#) and [H.R. 4541](#)) would expand the trauma-informed workforce in schools, healthcare settings, social services, first responders, and the justice system, and increase resources for communities to address the impact of trauma. ([TOOLKIT](#))
2. The Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act (CMWRA) ([S. 1452](#) and [H.R. 3073](#)) would help communities proactively develop local strategies to build population-level resilience by planning for and responding to the mental health challenges caused by disasters and toxic stress. ([TOOLKIT](#))
3. This advocacy effort is part of CTIPP's overall [#TakeOnTrauma](#) campaign, which launched in January 2023 to urge the newly sworn-in 118th class of Congress to support policies that create conditions for people, families, and communities to succeed.

E. AAP and other healthcare provider organizations are Lobbying for Firearm Safety:

1. **Ethan's Law** <https://oncall4kids.org/2024/02/04/ethans-law-s-173-hr-660/>
The congressional version of Ethan's Law would require storage of a weapon in a "secure gun storage or safety device" in a residence where a minor under age 18 could potentially gain access, or if an adult resident is ineligible to possess a firearm.
2. **Assault Weapons Ban** of 2023 (S.25/HR 698)

This bill makes it a crime to knowingly import, sell, manufacture, transfer, or possess a semiautomatic assault weapon (SAW) or large capacity ammunition feeding device (LCAFD)
3. **Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2023** failed many new bills

This bill establishes new background check requirements for firearm transfers between private parties (i.e., unlicensed individuals) unless a licensed gun dealer, manufacturer, or importer first takes possession of the firearm to conduct a background check.

S. 3407 (identical) Sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Warren

A bill to end the epidemic of gun violence and build safer communities by strengthening Federal firearms laws and supporting gun violence research, intervention, and prevention initiatives.

Advocating/Lobbying

Join a group – no time or financial commitment! It gives you strength!

Mom's Demand Action of Tennessee <https://momsdemandaction.org/about/>

Part of Everytown For Gun Safety

Rise and Shine <https://www.riseandshinethn.org/mission>

Voices for a Safer Tennessee <https://safertn.org/>

Protect My Care <https://protectmycare.org/>

How to Contact an elected official

<https://capitol.tn.gov/help/contacting.html>

Interactive Step by Step guide

https://forwardtn.org/action/?ms=PMC_OpenToolUser&sourceid=

Find your Tennessee Elected Official

<https://www.capitol.tn.gov/legislators/>

<https://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/Apps/fml2022/search.aspx>

Find a TN Bill

<https://www.capitol.tn.gov/legislation/>

Attend a subcommittee or committee session at Cordell Hull or a House or Senate Floor Session at the Capitol– anyone can go listen, hold a sign, stand in solidarity.

<https://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/schedule/>

Email, Tweet, Call – Information to include:

- Name, what district you are from, are you their constituent?
 - Do you call representing yourself as a citizen or an organization?
 - What bill are you calling about?
 - What do you want them to know about the bill – why you support or oppose - what effect you think a particular bill, if it becomes law, will have on you, your children, business, or community. Be concise, but specific.
 - Be polite, even if you disagree strongly. Lawmakers cannot please everyone. Your communication will be more effective if you are reasonable in your approach.
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- Suggest a course of action and offer assistance. Don't make promises or threats.
 - Thank them for taking the time to read/listen.

Request a meeting by emailing staff contact listed on your legislators site

- Name, district, constituent?
- Will you be speaking as a private citizen or a member of an organization?
- What bill would you like to talk about?
- Have something to leave behind
- Follow up with a thank you email

Meet with your legislator – they are just people....it is not scary.

- Be prepared.
- Be respectful.
- Start from a place that you can find commonality of values or experiences
- Share what shaped your perspective on an issue
- Ask for their support or for them to oppose a bill OR suggest that there be more discussion to iron out the details if a bill is vague or has room to do less/more.

Letter to the Editor, OpED – Forward Tennessee has a great tool to guide you in writing and then submitting one – no guarantees that it will be picked up, but you can post on your social media..

- Be absolutely certain you spell your senator's or representative's name correctly and use the correct address. If you don't, you could lose your audience.
 - Type or print legibly. Sign your name neatly and give your address correctly so your senator or representative can respond.
 - Keep letters, e-mail, and faxes brief. Never write more than one page. Concise written correspondence is more likely to grab and keep the reader's attention.
 - Identify your issue or opinion at the beginning of the letter, don't bury your main point under trivial text.
 - Cover only one issue per letter. If you have another issue to address, write another letter.
 - Back up your opinions with supporting facts. Your letter should inform the reader.
 - Avoid abbreviations or acronyms, and don't use technical jargon. Rather than impressing your reader, such terms will only frustrate him or her.
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- Don't send the same letter to more than one legislator. Personalized letters have more impact.

A Primer on how the Federal Legislative Branch Works:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/our-government/the-legislative-branch/>

All things House of Representatives – who represents you, bills... Etc

<https://www.house.gov/>

All things US Senate – who represents you, bills... Etc

<https://www.senate.gov/>