August 8, 2022

Dear Members of the Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics:

On Friday, August 5, the Indiana General Assembly passed a bill banning most abortions in the State of Indiana. The Governor signed that bill shortly after its passage, which is now set to become law on September 15, 2022. INAAP joined numerous other health organizations (including the Indiana State Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists – Indiana Chapter, the Indiana Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians, and the Indiana Hospital Association) to advocate against this bill because we believe it will have a significant detrimental impact on the health of women, adolescents, and children in our state.

While I am disappointed in the outcome, I am also proud of the adolescent medicine experts in our chapter who gave so much of their time over the past two weeks to share their experience and expertise. In particular, Dr. Mary Ott and Dr. Tracey Wilkinson testified to both the House of Representatives and the Senate during committee hearings that spanned multiple days. They fielded questions from elected officials, talked with media outlets about the implications of the bill, and navigated passionate crowds that filled the halls of the Statehouse. Further, Dr. Cynthia Robbins provided written testimony on behalf of our chapter, and numerous other adolescent experts helped our lawmakers and the public better understand the health implications of their actions.

This is certainly not the outcome for which we had hoped, but it became clear over the course of the debate on this bill that our testimony made a difference. For example, several lawmakers from both sides of the aisle cited the warnings and testimony of physicians as a major reason for their “no” vote. Further, provisions of the bill that would have included additional criminal penalties for physicians and require a notarized affidavit for victims of rape and incest were removed from the bill after those in the health community sounded the alarm.

Though the special session is now over, INAAP will continue to advocate for policies in our state that maintain comprehensive and confidential reproductive healthcare for our patients. We will also be analyzing the impacts of the new law over the coming weeks to help our members better understand the full ramifications for both their patients and their practice. We will also begin looking towards the 2023 legislative session to understand what avenues we might be able to pursue to make a positive change on this issue in Indiana. As always, thank you for your continued support of our chapter, and for all you do for the children of our state.

Sincerely,

Jaime Stelzer, MD, FAAP
President, Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics