

# American Academy of Pediatrics



## Georgia Chapter

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### Executive Director

Richard W. Ward, CAE

June 12, 2008

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Governor, State of Georgia  
State Capitol  
Atlanta, Ga. 30303

Dear Governor Perdue:

On behalf of the 1800 members of the Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics we would like to convey to you our support for a separate, independent Department of Public Health.

The current Division of Public Health plays many vital roles relative to the health and safety of children in Georgia. As pediatricians we actively cooperate & interface with public health programs and personnel to work cooperatively for the health of children.

We know the Health & Human Services Task is considering reorganization of the Department of Human Resources and we believe creating a separate independent Department of Public Health would serve to benefit Georgia's children in many ways. We believe the critical role Public Health plays in the lives of children here in our state warrants separate department status.

As a second option, combining Public Health with the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases also has its merits. These two divisions by certain logic have much in common; and further, moving two divisions out of the current DHR would allow that Department to provide more concentrated focus on its remaining divisions and missions.

Finally, no matter which of the above option you select, it is important that Public Health not merely be transferred to the existing Department of Community Health. DCH has an important role to play certainly, but at its core functions as a healthcare financing agency for Medicaid and state/university employees—not a programmatic agency. It's worth noting that in 10 of the largest 12 states in the nation, Public Health is in a separate department from its Medicaid agency. And with good reason: these states have noted the distinctly different missions of each. The scope and focus of the mission of each warrants separate department status to best serve the needs of the child and adult citizens of Georgia.

Thank you again very much for addressing this important issue as its impacts child health and welfare in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin C. Michaels MD FAAP".

Martin C. Michaels, MD  
President