The American Hospital Association’s (AHA) nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health organizations – includes more than 1,900 executives from general, women’s and children’s hospitals that provide maternal child and health services. Children's hospitals play a critical role in the nation’s health care delivery system by enhancing the continuum of care, providing specialized care for children and training the majority of the nation’s pediatricians.

Working for Children's Hospitals

As the Trump administration and the 115th U.S. Congress take shape, AHA will continue to advocate on behalf of all health care providers, including children's hospitals, for high-quality, affordable and accessible health care for all Americans. Key behavioral health advocacy and policy initiatives AHA worked on in 2016 are highlighted below.

- **Expanding Access to Medicaid.** AHA continues to support state hospital associations in non-expansion states to make the case for Medicaid expansion. Montana and Louisiana expanded their Medicaid programs in 2016.

- **Supporting Medical Innovation.** The AHA-supported 21st Century Cures Act is primarily designed to advance the development of medical treatments and cures through investments in research and updates to how new therapies are developed and approved. The major components of the legislation fund new initiatives at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the FDA. Specifically, it authorizes $4.8 billion for the NIH to fund new initiatives around precision medicine, cancer, neuroscience, and regenerative medicine.

- **Combating the Opioid Epidemic.** The 21st Century Cures Act provides $1 billion in grants to states to help address the opioid epidemic. AHA also worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop and distribute a new patient education resource on prescription opioids that outlines evidence-based information about the risks and side effects of the powerful painkillers. Resources are available at www.aha.org/opioidepidemic.

- **Fighting Escalating Drug Prices.** As a member of the steering committee of the Campaign for Sustainable RX Pricing, AHA has raised awareness with legislators, policymakers and the media of how rising prescription drug prices are putting a strain on the entire health care system. These efforts have included briefings on Capitol Hill and for the media.

- **Protecting Consumers from Insurer Consolidation.** At the urging of AHA and others, the Department of Justice (DOJ) took action to stop the mergers of four of the five largest health insurers. AHA worked to ensure that the proposed acquisitions received the highest level of scrutiny from regulators and Congress and both mergers were successfully stopped although one insurer is still considering an appeal.

- **Collaborated with National Organizations.** AHA works closely with many other national organizations to drive positive change in federal policies for children’s health – including the Children’s Hospital Association, Council of Women’s and Infants’ Specialty Hospitals, March of Dimes, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Perinatal Information Center, and the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission.
Engaging Children’s Hospital Leaders

AHA fosters dialogue among children’s hospital leaders and offers many opportunities to take an active role in shaping AHA policies and setting direction for the association and the field. They may have a formal role in association governance and/or policy formation by serving on AHA’s Board of Trustees, Committee on Health Strategy and Innovation, Regional Policy Boards, or Councils and Committees. In addition, children’s hospital leaders can participate on:

- **AHA Maternal and Child Health Council** that leads the Section for Maternal and Child Health by providing forums linking members with shared interests and missions to advise AHA on policy and advocacy activities and to discuss issues of great importance to children’s hospital leaders and the field as a whole.
- **Leadership Briefings** for small groups of executives to discuss new pilots, demonstrations and models that advance care and financing approaches for children and their families. In addition, children’s hospitals CEOs are individually contacted to share their views several times a year.

Providing Key Resources for Children’s Hospital Leaders

Based on member input, AHA, often in partnership with others, develops and offers resources to support behavioral health providers. Examples include:


- **Trends in Hospital Inpatient Drug Costs: Issues and Challenges.** This October 2016 study was commissioned by the AHA and the Federation of American Hospitals to better understand how drug prices are changing in the inpatient hospital setting and to inform policymakers and stakeholders.

- **Task Force on Ensuring Access in Vulnerable Communities.** This November 2016 AHA taskforce report outlines nine emerging strategies that can help preserve access to health care services in vulnerable communities.

For information about the overall value of membership at AHA, please see [http://www.aha.org/about/membership/value.shtml](http://www.aha.org/about/membership/value.shtml). More information on AHA’s children’s health initiatives can be found at [http://www.aha.org/about/membership/constituency/mch/index.shtml](http://www.aha.org/about/membership/constituency/mch/index.shtml).