AAP Provisional Committee on International Child Health

Statement of Principle

Since its inception, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has been concerned with child health throughout the world. Although dramatic successes have been scored, the change of fundamental conditions necessary to produce major improvements in the lives and well being of children in many instances has not occurred. Morbidity and mortality rates for children remain tragically and unacceptably high. Low birth weight, malnutrition, preventable infections, waterborne diseases, diarrhea, alcohol and drug abuse, armed conflict, and other calamities take a heavy toll on children.

Efforts to help stem the tide of disabling and lethal diseases in children have been mounted by many private, public, and multinational agencies. The AAP applauds and supports UNICEF, the Child Survival Programs, and other agencies in their efforts to promote mass immunizations, develop safe water supplies, improve nutrition, and foster the delivery of health services to children worldwide. The Academy believes the ultimate key to improving primary health care for all children is the development of partnerships in service, education, research, and advocacy by pediatricians throughout the world. To achieve this goal, a Task Force on International Child Health was established in 1987 to make and implement recommendations for improving global child health. The task force was recently assigned provisional committee status.

The Provisional Committee on International Child Health seeks to expand its efforts beyond Latin America to the rest of the developing world and proposes to facilitate partnerships and programs via the following approaches.

International Exchanges

The AAP will encourage links between US pediatricians and child health colleagues in other nations in a number of ways. Individual pediatricians may be involved in exchange programs with professionals in other countries. The Provisional Committee on International Child Health will also disseminate information concerning available opportunities for AAP fellows to work in developing countries.

International Professional Education

Visiting professors will be sent to teach in universities and participate in scientific meetings in developing countries. Academy Continuing Medical Education materials will be made available on Computer Disc-Read Only Memory (CD-ROM) to medical schools throughout the world. An attempt will be made to arrange visiting professorships for scientific meetings in developing countries.

“Chapter to chapter” links will be developed, wherein an individual US chapter will develop an ongoing relationship to address mutual concerns with a pediatric organization in another country. This may involve visits, textbook donations, tapes, satellite-transmitted educational programs, and specific collaborative service or research projects.

Increased Awareness of the Issues

The Provisional Committee on International Child Health will encourage publication of reports and articles concerning international child health in existing publications such as Pediatrics and AAP News. This will help fellows who wish to learn more about the special issues and programs related to the health status outlook and fundamental rights of children throughout the world. The Committee on

The recommendations in this statement do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment to be followed. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate.

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Scientific Meetings will be encouraged to devote portions of its annual and spring meetings to issues related to international child health.

International Cooperation

The AAP will continue to add its voice to support policies designed to protect the rights of children and to improve international health and survival. In addition, we will seek meetings with governmental and private agencies that sponsor international child health programs to coordinate efforts and share information. We will facilitate meetings of child health leaders from throughout the world to plan collaborative programs and exchange information concerning how to address the problems that impact negatively on child health in our respective nations.

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