



June 29, 2021

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Pappas
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Shaheen and Congressman Pappas:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the 133,500 family physicians and medical students we represent, I write to offer the Academy's endorsement of your legislation, the National ACERT Grant Program Authorization Act.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events or chronic stressors that are uncontrollable to a child. It is estimated that 61% of adults in the U.S. have experienced at least one ACE and 16% have experienced four or more.ⁱ Additionally, Black or Hispanic children are more likely to experience at least one of the nine commonly identified types of ACEs.ⁱⁱ Experiencing ACEs without supportive adults can lead to toxic stress, or an extensive activation of the stress response system. ACEs are also linked to a greater likelihood of negative health behaviors and developing chronic disease.ⁱⁱⁱ

Your legislation would allocate federal resources to establish community-based ACE Response Teams (ACERTs) to mitigate the impact of ACEs. This includes coordinated efforts connecting law enforcement and first responders to child specialists trained in child welfare intervention designed to reduce the impact of trauma.

Family physicians see patients of all ages and are deeply committed to the health outcomes of our patients. Given the mental and physical impact of ACEs on a person's health, family physicians [are invested](#) in ensuring federal resources are allocated to mitigate the impact of trauma on children and prevent intergenerational outcomes.

Thank you again for introducing this important piece of legislation and we look forward to working with you to pass the National ACERT Grant Program Authorization Act. If you have any additional questions, please contact Erica Cischke, Senior Legislative and Regulatory Manager, at ecischke@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

Gary L. LeRoy, MD, FAFPP
Board Chair, American Academy of Family Physicians

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ⁱ National Conference of State Legislatures. Adverse Childhood Experiences. February 1, 2021. Accessed June 25, 2021 at <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces.aspx>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.