

Public Notice

AAP Announces Intent to Release its Sixth Major Circumcision Policy

Doctors Opposing Circumcision reaffirms its Genital Integrity Policy

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) revealed that it intends to publish its sixth major circumcision policy on Monday, August 27, 2012 and in the September 2012 issue of *Pediatrics*, its house journal. This will be its sixth position statement on male circumcision, as it has previously published position statements in 1971, 1975, 1983, 1989, and 1999.

The new AAP policy has been five years in the making. The intent to publish a new statement was announced in 2007, however internal disagreement on its content has prevented publication. The new statement likely will be a compromise between positions.

The AAP, despite its high-sounding academic name, actually is a trade association of pediatric doctors. Its primary duty is to advance the business and professional interests of its 60,000 members who are called “fellows”. The interests of its child-patients are a distant second to their primary interest.

There is a severe and intractable conflict of interest between the financial interests of its fellows and the best interests of the child-patient. Most of its fellows perform non-therapeutic circumcisions on children and profit thereby. These members do not want anything to interfere or disrupt their steady income stream. The AAP will not publish a statement that would harm that income stream. The AAP ensures the outcome of its circumcision statements by appointing doctors who are known to have a pro-circumcision position. The current task force, like previous task forces on circumcision, is stuffed with pro-circumcision doctors, including its chairwoman. Obstetricians and family doctors also profit by doing unnecessary circumcisions. The presence on the task force of a representative from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Academy of Family Doctors (AAFP), as well as Dr. Stephen Wegner, MD, JD, representing the AAP Health Care Financing Committee, highlight the business and financial nature of the forthcoming circumcision policy statement. We anticipate a very self-serving statement that protects doctors’ incomes.

Previous AAP circumcision statements have exaggerated the alleged, but unproved prophylactic benefits of non-therapeutic circumcision while minimizing the risks, complications, drawbacks, permanent irreversible physical, sexual, and emotional injury of male circumcision. We expect that this one will use prevention of HIV sexual transmission as a reason to circumcise boys, even though the African studies that indicate circumcision prevents HIV infection in adult males have been shown to be trash and,^{1 2} in any event, not applicable to infant boys in North America.

¹ Van Howe, Storms MS. [How the circumcision solution in Africa will increase HIV infections](#). *Journal of Public Health in Africa* 2011; 2:e4 doi:10.4081/jphia.2011.e4.

² Boyle GJ, Hill G. [Sub-Saharan African randomised clinical trials into male circumcision and HIV transmission: Methodological, ethical and legal concerns](#). *J Law Med* (Melbourne) 2011;19:316-34.

In recent years, 46 percent of boys born in the United States have left the birth facility with intact foreskins. There is not a shred of evidence that these boys are less healthy than the 54 percent of boys who were circumcised.

Doctors who perform circumcisions have had their income stream curtailed by the decision of eighteen state Medicaid agencies to terminate payments for medically unnecessary non-therapeutic circumcision of children. The AAP is expected to call for restoration of those taxpayer-funded Government payments to doctors, so as to restore the income of their fellows.

The AAP, thus far, has consistently refused to recognize that children are human beings, who have legal rights to bodily integrity and the security of their person under both American law and international human rights law, which are trampled by the unnecessary amputation of the functional body part called the foreskin. The AAP has consistently misapplied legal rules regarding surrogate consent for therapeutic operations on children to non-therapeutic circumcision. By so doing, it has tried to protect the alleged parental right to cut body parts from boys at will for religious/cultural reasons or no reason at all.

As noted above, the AAP is simply a trade association, which advances the perceived interests of its fellows. Its position statements are not legal or medical imperatives and do not have the force of law or public policy. This statement on circumcision is going to be *all about money*, not about child health or welfare.

The [Royal Dutch Medical Association](#) has called male circumcision a human rights violation and an unethical practice. The AAP's forthcoming pro-circumcision policy is not supported by foreign medical associations.

A court in Cologne, Germany says parents may not grant consent for unnecessary circumcision. We will see shortly whether the AAP will reform its abusive practices. We are not hopeful.

Doctors Opposing Circumcision believes that circumcision of children violates numerous legal rights of the child and is highly unethical, if not unlawful. We believe that genital integrity provides the highest level of health and well-being for the child. We do not know what the AAP is going to say in their new statement, but we are circumcision experts and we are convinced that non-circumcision is best for children. We reaffirm our [Genital Integrity Policy Statement of 2008](#), which advocates genital integrity for boys.

We urge parents to ignore this latest statement from the AAP and to continue to protect their sons' whole and complete bodies.

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Wednesday, August 22, 2012.