

## RESOLUTION

Subject: Child Abuse and Neglect as a Public Health Emergency  
Submitted by: Michael Kuduk, MD (KMA President) and Maggie Stull (MSS)  
Referred to: Reference Committee

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WHEREAS, the definition of child abuse and neglect in the state of Kentucky encompasses physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse/exploitation, emotional abuse, and abandonment<sup>3</sup>; and

WHEREAS, in Kentucky, domestic violence, substance abuse, and inadequate housing were the leading risk factors in cases of child abuse and neglect<sup>5</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the Child Maltreatment report, which is released by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Children's Bureau, found Kentucky's rate of child abuse victims was 12.3 per 1,000 children, which is higher than the United States' rate of 7.7 per 1,000 children in 2022<sup>4</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the Child Maltreatment report finds that Kentucky has more than doubled the time it takes for officials to contact a family or child once a report of child abuse is made since 2018, with Kentucky taking 221 hours to respond, compared to the national average of 93 hours<sup>4</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the largest age group of victims of child abuse and neglect were under the age of 1 year old<sup>6</sup>; and

WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect are important components of adverse childhood experiences, which are known to affect adult physical and mental health adversely in a dose-response fashion, including an increased risk for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder<sup>7</sup>; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA recognize child abuse and neglect as a public health emergency in the Commonwealth; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA engage in educating providers and the public regarding the long-term negative effects of child abuse and neglect on its victims; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA advocate for ways to reduce the burden of child abuse and neglect in the Commonwealth.

## References

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1. <https://nortonchildrens.com/news/kentucky-child-abuse-statistics/>
2. Kentucky's child abuse victim rate was about twice as high as the U.S. rate of 8.1 victims and slightly more than Indiana's rate of 13.6 victims (2021). Most child abuse victims in Kentucky, Indiana and the U.S. were younger than age 1.
3. Only five states reported higher child abuse victim rates than Kentucky in 2021: West Virginia Maine, Massachusetts, Iowa and Alaska.
4. <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/child%20abuse%20?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-0-4659.xml>
5. Our American Medical Association recognizes that suspected **child abuse** is being underreported by physicians.
6. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/resources/definitions-child-abuse-and-neglect-kentucky/>
7. <https://nortonchildrens.com/news/kentuckys-rate-of-child-abuse-continues-to-outpace-the-national-average/#:~:text=Kentucky's%20rate%20of%20child%20abuse%20decreased%20in%202022%2C%20but%20the%20still%20surpasses%20the%20national%20average.&text=The%20Child%20Maltreatment%202022%20report,was%2012.3%20per%201%2C000%20children.>
8. <https://kyyouth.org/the-latest-child-maltreatment-report-shows-improvements-but-still-too-many-victims-in-kentucky/>
9. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/data-research/child-maltreatment>
10. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10896-012-9474-9>