



Governor's Commission on Autism

Governor Mark Parkinson
Capitol, 300 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 212S
Topeka, KS 66612-1590

December 30, 2009

RE: Governor's Commission on Autism, 2009 Report and Recommendations:

In the last few days of 2009, we take this opportunity to reflect significant events regarding autism in our nation and state. After a fifteen month hiatus, the members of the Governor's Commission on Autism were contacted during a re-organizational phone conference and asked if they were willing to return and accept the responsibilities of their appointment to this Commission. The Commission members were called upon for a renewed sense of mission and purpose. The Commission is now back to a full 15 member commission to serve our state. The report and recommendations for 2009 are as follows:

MEETINGS:

The Commission met on the following dates: March 30, 2009, Autism Awareness at the Capital; July 27, 2009; September 11, 2009, Learn the Signs, Act Early, Kansas State Fair Booth; and November 6, 2009 in conjunction with Autism Across the Life Span Autism Conference.

AUTISM STATISTICS:

October 5, 2009 the American Academy of Pediatrics released this article regarding the increase of autism diagnosis: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/peds.2009-1522v1> and this related article: <http://www.autism-society.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=15065>

December 18, 2009 the Center of Disease Control announced and released this report stating autism now affects 1 in every 110 children; 1 in every 70 boys; and 1% of the children in the United States is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html>

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Governor's Commission on Autism makes the following recommendations:

- The Commission on Autism concurs; Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is an urgent public health concern and recognizes that more children are being identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder, **1 in 110 children**. As of this date, the Kansas Department of Education indicates 2233 children reported as indentified with ASD, ages three through twenty-one (3-21) that receive special education services. Furthermore, the Commission reports; there is no real data collection for the determination of the number of children diagnosed or receiving services age 0-3 or adult individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, therefore a concise total number of Kansans with Autism Spectrum Disorder cannot be determined without a formal registry. http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntlc8_autism_state_profiles_kansas
- The Commission on Autism believes and recommends that services and supports for Kansans affected by autism spectrum disorder be individualized and be provided throughout their lifespan. These services and supports should be completely integrated and occur along a continuum. Funding must be prioritized in the state of Kansas and a pure accountability to Kansans must accompany the individualized services provided to our children, adults and families, throughout the entire state of Kansas.

- The Commission on Autism believes and recommends that Autism awareness must be increased and ideologies must change in every aspect, thus empowering individual's, parents, educators, medical and mental health professionals; specialized providers and our legislative leaders. All Kansans must share the right of knowledge and accessibility to developmental awareness; diagnosis; insured health care coverage and treatment, birth through life. Further, opportunities for full participation in education, adult services, employment and community involvement, must be made certain.
- The Commission on Autism recognizes and supports legislation that provides Health Insurance coverage for the diagnosis and coverage of medically necessary treatments to include occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and ABA therapy when it is deemed appropriate and beneficial for those with ASD in Kansas. Currently, *SB 12 (HB 2367)* has been introduced to Kansas Legislators. Furthermore, the Commission recognizes current state health plans do not cover all these services and rural areas of Kansas woefully lack adequate medical and professional providers in autism spectrum disorders, thus believe and make recommendation that training, recruitment and retaining these professionals in these areas must be prioritized.

<http://www.autism-society.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=13165>

http://www.autism-society.org/site/DocServer/ASA_MODEL_INS_LEGISLATION.pdf?docID=11961

- The Commission on Autism concurs: ***"It has been shown that among families who have children with special health care needs; those affected with ASDs are more likely to report problems with access to coordinated care and to experience financial and time burdens. Many parents even reported having to stop work to care for their child with an ASD. One study showed that individuals with an ASD had average medical expenditures that exceeded those without an ASD by \$4,110 to \$6,200 per year. It has been estimated that, overall, economic costs associated with autism are approximately \$35 billion dollars per year. These costs include education for children with ASDs and treatments to help reduce the symptoms of the disorders. Families, public agencies, and some private agencies bear the responsibility of paying for these services."*** [CDC-ADDM report]
- The Commission on Autism believes and recommends that all Kansans with developmental disabilities should be protected from discrimination and be ensured access to the tools to succeed throughout their life.
- The Commission on Autism makes recommendation that the Commission undertake and engage all Kansans in developing a state plan for the best possible outcomes for individuals with autism spectrum disorders throughout the lifespan and to every region of the state of Kansas.

KANSAS INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES:

<http://www.srskansas.org/hcp/css/Autism/AutismCommissionBrochure.pdf>

[http://www.srskansas.org/hcp/css/Autism/Autism %20Kids Receiving Services Map.pdf](http://www.srskansas.org/hcp/css/Autism/Autism%20Kids%20Receiving%20Services%20Map.pdf)

<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=2836>

http://www.easterseals.com/site/PageServer?pagename=ntlc8_autism_state_profiles_kansas

Respectfully Submitted:

Jeanie Zortman, Chair

Kansas Governor's Commission