

PLEASE SUPPORT HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS FOR THE TREATMENT OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Senate Bill 09-244

Senator Shaffer, Representative Primavera

Why This Bill is Important?

The Autism Society of America estimates that the lifetime cost of caring for a child with autism ranges from \$3.5 million to \$5 million, but **2/3rds of this cost can be avoided with early treatment** and that is what SB09-244 is designed to do. It is fiscally irresponsible to not treat autism at an early stage.

Currently, 1 out of 169 school age children in Colorado has autism. In the past decade, the U.S. population has grown 13% and the recorded incidence of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has risen 173%.

Although the cause of autism is unknown, autism is treatable. 90% of people treated benefit. Behavioral and other therapeutic interventions are critical for improving communication, forming relationships, decreasing maladaptive behavior and developing independence. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the use of behavior analytic methods and research findings to change socially important behaviors in meaningful ways and is an evidence based modality for treatment of autism. Military families through TRICARE benefit from coverage for ABA treatment of autism.

Health insurance falls far short of covering intervention strategies. Currently, 10 states have passed autism insurance reform, 24 states have introduced legislation, 3 states have pending legislation, and 7 states have legislation under development. President Obama cites autism as our nation's number one medical concern.

What SB 244 Will Do?

- Defines autism spectrum disorders to include the three pervasive neurobiological disorders: Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder and Atypical Autism
- Requires health insurance to cover assessment, diagnosis and treatment of autism
- Defines coverage for the treatment of autism
- Qualifies that autism treatments must be "medically necessary, appropriate, effective and efficient"
- Delineates which health care professionals are eligible to provide treatment, and requires appropriate certification and credentialing
- SB 244 has minimal impact on insurance premiums (.49% - about \$46 annually **per Mandate Report*)
- States the annual cap on treatment for ABA therapies:
 1. Birth – age 8: \$34,000
 2. Age 9-18: \$12,000

Your YES vote on SB 244 ensures timely access to appropriate treatment for ASD, improve outcomes for people with ASD and reduce the cost of care over their lifetimes by two-thirds.

Organizations that Support SB 244

Autism Society of Colorado
Autism Speaks
American Academy of Pediatrics, CO Chapter
Alliance Colorado
Association for Community Living
Colorado Coalition for Medically Underserved
Colorado Department of Education
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
CCB Partners

Family Voices Colorado
Professional Pediatric Homecare, Inc.
Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas
Arc of Aurora
Arc of Colorado
Arc of Denver
Arc of Jefferson County
The Children's Hospital
League of Women Voters

For more information, contact:

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