

Dear Mr. Kipper and Mr. Plain,

Thank you for hosting last night's public comment session regarding Nevada Essential Benefits. The process was helpful in understanding the charge you all have been assigned and what it will hold for our future. As a parent, business owner and speech-language pathologist in our State, I am always thinking about the future. I want my children to grow to be kind, thoughtful, proud, strong and determined individuals for our community. I want the future of my business to be as successful as it is today to ensure that I can provide quality care for families and provide jobs for individuals in our community. I also look to the future for the children my company provides services to. These children, our youngest and most vulnerable citizens of Nevada, will be mine and your future one day soon. Without proper interventions during infancy, toddler-hood and childhood these children will not even begin to reach their potential. Waiting until a child enters school to receive therapy is TOO late and there are many published research projects that will show you this information. These children NEED HABILITATIVE care on a regular basis. The sooner the children get care, the sooner the families can get back to work and start contributing to society again. Without care, these children will require total care and will continue to require total care for their lifespan.

It is imperative to our State's future that the Essential Benefits cover:
1) Habilitative Therapy Services for speech, physical, occupational, vision, nutrition, and hearing

2) Habilitative Services need to cover ALL children. To cover Autism only would be a bold discrimination. I was very active in the legislature to pass the Autism Bill several years back. I commend those families and professionals for their hard work and loud voices;

however, there are many congenital and developmental disorders that are fewer in number, quieter in voice BUT still need support.

3) Speech Therapy must be written into the plan. Speech therapy is not just the inability to produce intelligible words. In fact, this is a small portion of what it targets. Speech therapy is essential in teaching children basic communication for first needs such as feeding, emotional health, physical health, well being, safety, problem solving and skills to carry out

jobs and roles in our community. Children need Speech, PT and OT when determined necessary. To offer only OT and PT would be limiting an individual's potential.

Early intervention (ages birth to 3) and habilitative care are essential and are truly preventative care for the future. Last night we heard "We need to get the biggest bang for the buck", well I can tell you that investing a little bit of that "buck" into the children will give our State a better outcome in the future.

In closing I want you to look at a list of diagnoses of children I serve. These are children with significant needs, but also significant potential. When provided the care they need, these children improve and the outcome for their family improve, thus the outcome for our community improves:

- 1) Autism Spectrum Disorders
- 2) Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- 3) Cerebral Palsy - injury to brain prior to age one
- 4) Stroke/Cerebral Vascular Accident
- 5) Fragile X
- 6) Cleft lip and palate
- 7) Deaf and hearing impaired
- 8) Down syndrome
- 9) Williams syndrome
- 10) Congenital Heart defects
- 11) Limb lose/Amputee
- 12) Mental Retardation
- 13) PDD-NOS
- 14) Spina Bifida
- 15) Von willebrand disease
- 16) Hydrocephalus
- 17) Childhood Cancers
- 18) Lobectomy
- 19) Meningitis
- 20) Transverse Myelitis
- 21) Trach Dependent
- 22) Vision impaired
- 23) chromosomal abnormalities/genetic disorder

This list is just a short version of children in need of service. It would be impossible to capture all the children and diagnoses that need attention.

I strongly encourage you to think about the children and families in need and think about our State's future. Give these children access to a VOICE, access to COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT and access to a fulfilling and productive life.

If I can be of service to you or your staff in providing information about pediatric care and therapies, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you again for your time and consideration of this very critical matter. I feel confident that Nevada will not look past it's youngest citizens.

Kind regards,

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