

Dear Mr. Plain,

My name is Jessica Arellano and I am writing to urge you, and any committee members that are currently in the process of choosing benchmarks for insurance plans in Nevada to include habilitative services in its minimum level of benefits. As a Registered Nurse, but more importantly, as an Aunt to a child with cerebral palsy and motor and speech delays, I can not stress how important having occupational, speech, and physical therapies have been in her life. My eight year old niece, Jayden, suffered two cardiac arrests at age one, was on life support, and almost needed a heart transplant--all within an 5 week period. To this day, all of her physicians do not know what led to this attack on her heart. But its after affects are known--a stroke to a major speech portion of her brain, fine and gross motor delays, and inability to communicate verbally. Since her return home so many years ago, her parents have done everything in their ability to ensure that Jayden has had access to speech, occupation, and physical therapies on a weekly basis. These therapies have allowed her to walk on her own and to communicate needs via PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). Seeing her walking, smiling, laughing, and pointing to a picture of milk to tell us, her family, that she is thirsty are major milestones. Had it not been for the countless hours of therapy she was exposed to, I can not say she would be at the level and quality of life she is at now. It is for my niece Jayden, a child who is not Autistic, that I urge you to include all Nevadans who have types of developmental and physical delays to receive access to therapies. These types of benefits should not be limited to Autistic children only, and should not discriminate others based on age, level of disability, or type of disability. According to the Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R), habilitative services should include, "ongoing, medically necessary therapies provided to children with developmental disabilities and similar conditions who need habilitative therapies to achieve function and skills never before acquired." The AAPM&R also goes on to state that, " extending life, reducing disability, improving functioning, decreasing pain and reducing healthcare and associated costs should be considered when evaluating benefit mandates." In closing, I truly hope you consider the needs of families with children like Jayden, and just how much they depend on the ability to have access to therapies for their developmental growth. Not having a habilitative offering in Nevada's benefits package is not conducive with providing all of Nevada's

children with the tools they need to live a long, independent, and quality filled life.

Sincerely,

Jessica Arellano, RN, BSN, CNOR