



Nevada Commission On Autism Spectrum Disorders

Addressing issues across the lifespan

June 4, 2015

Good morning, for the record, I am Jan Crandy, chair of the Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders, a parent and a contractor for Nevada's Autism Treatment Assistance Program, ATAP.

I am here to ask and thank you for your support to ensure all insurance eligible children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have access to medically necessary treatment. This includes Applied Behavior Analysis, speech, occupational and physical therapies, appropriate medical evaluations.

Nevada Legislators passed an insurance mandate for coverage specific to treating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in 2009, during this Legislative session the benefit was doubled. It is critical that coverage for applied behavior analysis and other habilitative therapeutic care at prescribed dosages be included as part of the EHB and available to those children insured through the Exchange.

Families continue to experience barriers when accessing their insurance coverage in Nevada. Habilitative care is limited and often insufficient to meet the prescribed dosages.

Autism spectrum disorders now affect 1 in 68 children. The Nevada Department of Education indicates there are more than 6,200 students with ASD. Left untreated, in most cases, ASD leads to a life of dependency. It is estimated that it costs \$3.2 million to take care of an individual with autism over their lifetime. Adult care and lost productivity are the biggest sources for that amount.

The good news is the **cost of lifelong care can be reduced by 2/3** with an early diagnosis and intervention. This is a possible cost savings of over \$2 million dollars per person!

I believe Governor Sandoval showed diligence in the development of his budget and his plan to address the federal directive given to states in July 2014 to provide for Medicaid coverage of medically necessary treatment to children with ASD.

His plan is critical to 1,900 Medicaid eligible children and their families whose lives will be changed because of the delivery of applied behavior analysis (ABA) treatment they will now have access to.

Research shows treatment models using Applied Behavior Analysis are evidence-based...

- ABA has been demonstrated to ameliorate the symptoms of ASD when delivered early and intensively.
- ABA has been demonstrated to be effective in significantly reducing self-injurious, aggressive, self-stimulatory and wandering behavior across the lifespan.
- ABA has been demonstrated to be effective in building new skills for individuals with ASD across the lifespan.

Research has shown children who receive early intense intervention using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), need less supports as adults and as many as 47% of these children participate successfully in regular education classrooms and go on to lead independent lives. While 90% of the untreated, will lead a life of dependency. The opportunity to be one of the 47% has not been a reality for most Nevadans with

ASD, as access to evidence-based treatment continues to be limited. Nevada must remedy this fact. The older a child is when treatment begins, the longer we can expect treatment and supports to be necessary..

When the price tag to provide a life time of care for **ONE untreated low functioning person** with autism can run as high as \$6 million. Our goal must be to help each child reach their highest level of functioning, so Nevada CAN save dollars in adult care.

Nevada Legislators passed an insurance mandate for coverage specific to treating children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in 2009, during this Legislative session the benefit was doubled. It is critical that coverage for applied behavior analysis and other habilitative therapeutic care at prescribed dosages be included as part of the EHB and available to those children insured through the Exchange.

Your decision can change a child's whole existence.
Together, we can change lives.

Thank you and with hope,
Jan Crandy
3812 Ginger Creek
Las Vegas, Nevada 89108

Without early intervention, the symptoms of autism can worsen, resulting in more costly treatment over the course of a lifetime. The Autism Society estimates that the lifetime cost of caring for an individual with autism ranges from \$3.5-\$5 million.

(Autism Society, this figure includes insurance costs and non-covered expenses, Medicaid waivers, educational spending, housing, transportation, employment, related therapeutic services and parental productivity loss.)

With effective treatment, the lifetime costs can be reduced by 65% (Jarbrink & Knapp, 2001)