

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 30, 2007

**SUPPORT CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH AUTISM**  
**INCREASE SERVICES AND TREATMENT!**

**ATTENTION: HEALTH LA**

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1881, the Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act (EPIAA).

In the United States, one out of every 150 children has an autism spectrum disorder – a prevalence rate much higher than even a few short years ago. The range and severity of symptoms of autism vary from case to case, but symptoms often include difficulties in communicating and interacting with other individuals, and exhibiting repetitive behaviors and intense interests in specific subjects. The care involved in treating these symptoms often requires hours of intensive therapy every week – regimens that are often inaccessible to many families because of the expense involved.

While we do not know what causes autism, we do know that with early intervention and concentrated treatment, the symptoms of autism spectrum disorder can be mitigated, enabling individuals with autism and their families to live less isolated lives. The EPIAA will provide additional treatment and support resources, increasing access to effective therapies and essential support services for people with autism. The legislation does the following:

**Creates a Treatment, Services, and Interventions Evaluation Task Force**

An Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) will be developing a long-term strategy for providing autism care and treatment services, there is currently no on-going effort to plan for improved access to services within the immediate future. The EPIAA would establish a Treatment, Interventions and Services Evaluation Task Force to evaluate currently available therapies and services and make recommendations to the IACC and the Secretary regarding ways to expand access to effective treatments and services across the nation.

**Establish a Demonstration Grant Program to Assist States with Service Provision**

In order to improve access to effective treatments, interventions, and services, as designated by the Task Force, the EPIAA would establish an \$80 demonstration grant program over four years to help states to provide these services to individuals and families with autism.

**Develop a Demonstration Grant Program for Adult Autism Services**

While early diagnosis and intervention services are critical for children with autism, the need for intervention and services continues across the lifespan. In order to help address the needs of adults

living with autism, the EPIAA would establish an \$85 million demonstration grant program to help provide appropriate interventions and services to adults with autism.

### **Increase Access to Services Following Diagnosis**

The bill provides \$60 million to expand access to treatments, interventions, and services to children with autism, with the goal of providing and coordinating multi-agency, intensive, and comprehensive, evidence-based treatments, interventions and services.

### **Increase Support for Developmental Disabilities Centers of Excellence**

In order to increase the number of individuals across sectors that can provide adequate care and treatment services for individuals living with autism, the EPIAA would increase by \$77 million the capacity of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service to train professionals in meeting the treatment, interventions and service needs of both children and adults living with autism.

### **Emerging Needs Protection and Advocacy Program**

The bill provides \$40 million to make grants to protection and advocacy systems to address the needs of individuals with autism and other emerging populations of individuals with disabilities.

Again, we urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1881. Please have your staff contact Kenneth DeGraff with Rep. Mike Doyle at 202-225-2135, Tim Lynagh with Rep. Chris Smith at 202-225-3765, Emily Gibbons with Rep. Eliot Engel at 202-225-2464, or Mary Mills Ritchie with Rep. Chip Pickering at 202-225-5031.

Sincerely,



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Rep. Mike Doyle



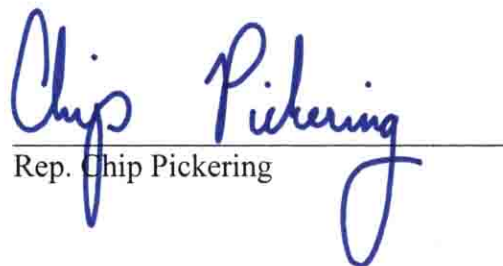
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Rep. Chris Smith



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Rep. Eliot Engel



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Rep. Chip Pickering