



**autism speaks®**

**Supporting the Arizona Autism Community  
During COVID-19 Through Advocacy**

**May 28, 2020**

## our mission

Autism Speaks is dedicated to promoting solutions, across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families. We do this through advocacy and support; increasing understanding and acceptance of people with autism; and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions.



# Mission Objectives

Through partnerships and collaboration, we are committed to:

- Increasing global understanding & acceptance of people with autism
- Being a catalyst for life-enhancing research breakthroughs
- Increasing early childhood screening & timely interventions
- Improving the transition to adulthood
- Ensuring access to reliable information & services throughout the life span

Autism Speaks does not provide medical or legal advice or services. Rather, Autism Speaks provides general information about autism as a service to the community. The information provided in this email is not a recommendation, referral or endorsement of any resource, therapeutic method, or service provider and does not replace the advice of medical, legal or educational professionals. Autism Speaks has not validated and is not responsible for any information or services provided by third parties. You are urged to use independent judgment and request references when considering any resource associated with the provision of services related to autism.

# Challenges the Autism Community is Facing

- Abrupt discontinuation of educational services
- Closure of day programming
- Closure of clinics
- Shift to telehealth
- Mental health supports for parents
- Lack of connection to community opportunities and supports
- Severe disruption of community employment
- Discontinuation of respite relief for families
- Disruption of much-needed routines
- Loss of income for families
- Challenging behaviors
- Access to healthcare with appropriate supports



# Contact our Autism Response Team

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## How to contact ART

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Your call will be routed to the team member for your region. We also have a dedicated Spanish language toll-free number.

**1-888-AUTISM2 (1-888-288-4762)**

**En Español: 1-888-772-9050**

**[help@autismspeaks.org](mailto:help@autismspeaks.org)**



# Agenda

Welcome  
Heidi Naranjo  
Director Field  
Development  
Arizona

Federal Advocacy  
Update  
David Sitcovsky  
Senior Director  
Policy and Federal  
Government  
Affairs

State Advocacy  
Update  
Judith Ursitti  
Director State  
Government  
Affairs

Community  
Outreach  
Marianne Sullivan  
Director  
Community  
Outreach



# Federal Advocacy Response



# Federal COVID Legislation – What's Passed

## **MARCH 6: COVID 1**

### **Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations**

Provides \$8.3 billion in emergency funding for federal agencies to respond to the coronavirus outbreak

## **MARCH 18: COVID 2**

### **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**

- Provides emergency paid sick and family leave
  - DOL has provided Q&A regarding these provisions of the law
- Tax credits
- Free COVID-19 testing (where available)
- Expands food assistance and unemployment benefits
- Increases Medicaid funding

## **MARCH 27: COVID 3**

### **Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act**

Provides \$2 trillion in funding for provisions, including:

- Economic impact payments to most Americans
- Increased unemployment benefits
- Hundreds of billions of dollars to address the public health response
- Assistance for small businesses and other employers to retain employees and keep their businesses operating
- Billions of dollars for schools
- Extends the Money Follows the Person program through November

# Federal COVID Legislation – What's Passed

**APRIL 24: COVID 3.5**

**Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act**

Interim bill to replenish small business assistance program and address other issues:

- Limited scope to address Paycheck Protection Program and funding for hospitals and testing.

# Our advocacy priorities during the COVID crisis

- Additional funding for home and community-based services (HCBS)
- Additional funding to meet the educational needs of students with autism
- Protecting the [rights of students under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) and other laws
- Expanded access to telehealth services for health care needs
- Eligibility for \$500 economic impact payments for dependents over age 17
- According caregivers of adults with disabilities the [same emergency paid sick and family medical leave](#) policies accorded caregivers of children
- [Preventing discrimination](#) in treatment decisions and care allocation based on disability

**Congressmen Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Mike Doyle (D-PA), co-chairs of the Congressional Autism Caucus, have sent letters to congressional leadership advocating for many of these priorities.**

# What's next?

- COVID 4 – negotiations ongoing
- On May 15th, the House of Representatives passed The Heroes Act – a \$3 trillion relief package.
- Priorities that are included in The Heroes Act:
  - Substantial increase in funding for HCBS
  - \$100 billion for education (in addition to \$1 trillion in general assistance for state and local governments)
  - Dependents over 17 retroactively eligible for economic impact payments. Eligible for additional \$1,200 payments in Heroes Act.
  - Clarifies eligibility for emergency paid sick and family leave for caregivers of adults with disabilities
  - \$10 million for DD Act activities
- The Senate has not indicated that it will take up this bill. Path from here is unclear...



# State Advocacy Response



# HEALTHCARE

Arizona was approved for an 1135 emergency waiver on March 23, 2020 by CMS, the federal Medicaid agency. This allows for greater flexibility which will:

- Temporarily suspend Medicaid fee-for-service prior authorization requirements.
- Extend pre-existing authorizations for which a beneficiary has previously received prior authorization through the end of the public health emergency
- Suspend Pre-Admission Screening and Annual Resident Review (PASRR) Level I and Level II Assessments for 30 days
- Modify Provider Enrollment

Additional information can be found [here](#).

# Telehealth Services

- States have broad flexibility to cover telehealth through Medicaid including the methods of communication (such as telephonic, video technology commonly available on smart phones and other devices) to use.
- Telehealth is important not just for people who are unable to go to the doctor, but also for when it is not advisable to go in person. No federal approval is needed for state Medicaid programs to reimburse providers for telehealth services in the same manner or at the same rate that states pay for face-to-face services.
- Governor Ducey issued on [executive order](#) requiring coverage of telehealth services in state-regulated insurance plans as well as AHCCS.





# Telehealth Services

## AHCCS Response to COVID-19

AHCCCS covers all forms of telehealth services including asynchronous (store and forward), remote patient monitoring, teledentistry, and telemedicine (interactive audio and video).

As per AHCCCS Medical Policy Manual 320-I:

*There are no AHCCCS restrictions for where the provider is located when providing services via telehealth. In addition to utilizing current AHCCCS registered providers, Arizona was authorized by CMS on March 23rd to provisionally and temporarily enroll providers who are enrolled with another State Medicaid Agency or Medicare for the duration of the public health emergency. Additional information can be found [here](#).*



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# Telehealth Services

Services the autism community could potentially access via telehealth include but are not limited to:

- Behavioral health treatments, including applied behavior analysis
- Therapeutic services, including speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy
- Psychological and psychiatric care



## HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

### Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) Appendix K Application was approved on April 6, 2020

- Flexibility to allow providers, in consultation with the state's licensing agency, to provide services in alternative settings.
- Temporarily modify person-centered service plan development process and individual(s) responsible for person-centered service plan development, including qualifications.
- Allow for payment for services for the purpose of supporting waiver participants in an acute care hospital or short-term institutional stay when necessary supports are not available in that setting during this emergency.
- Temporarily provide retainer payments intended to ensure provider sustainability by helping to offset the reduction in revenue experienced by providers.
- Allow for legally responsible individuals (parents and spouses) to receive payment for direct care services. Permitting parents of minor children to receive payment for direct care services.

**Additional details can be found [here](#).**

**Additional information about DDD services can be found [here](#).**

## Special Education/Early Intervention

Arizona's Exceptional Student Services is continually updating a Q&A Document to address questions related to the provision of special education during COVID-19. [View the current version here.](#)

Additionally, Kathy Hoffman, Arizona's Superintendent of Public Instruction, recently sent this e-mail to school leaders:

Additional detail about the e-mail discussing summer programming and PPE can be found [here](#).

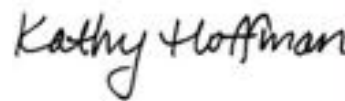


### COVID19 Update: Summer Programs and PPE

Dear School Leaders,

Yesterday, we sent the below email regarding summer operations, and I wanted to provide more clarity on this issue. The Governor's school closure declaration expires at the end of the current academic year in May. Going forward, decisions regarding in-person use of facilities is a local control decision and we urge you to consider the public health guidance linked below as you make plans regarding use of your facilities beginning June 1, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kathy Hoffman'.

Kathy Hoffman, MS, CCC-SLP  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Arizona Department of Education

## Special Education/Early Intervention

The state of Arizona is receiving funds from the COVID-3 (CARES) stimulus package through the Education Stabilization Fund.

K-12	\$ 305.0 million
Post-secondary	\$ 406.2 million
Governor's Discretionary	\$ 70.3 million

It is critical that advocacy occur so that Arizona students with autism receive appropriate supports and services, including but not limited to:

- Hardware, software, communication devices, and other assistive technology
- Appropriate transition from early intervention to special education
- Services not received during the time of school closures and remote learning
- Appropriate transition out of special education to adulthood

# Connect with us!

Sign up for advocacy alerts and emails and find your elected officials at  
[www.autismspeaks.org/advocacy](http://www.autismspeaks.org/advocacy)

Follow our advocacy profiles



| [Autism Speaks Advocacy](#)



| [@AutismVotes](#)



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Community Outreach



# COVID-19 Information and Resources

These are particularly challenging times for the autism community:

- Disrupted routines, changes in access to services and the uncertainty is taxing for people with autism and their families.
- Parents and caregivers are taking on roles of teacher, service provider and therapists.
- Adults with autism are cut off from services face loss of jobs.
- Autism Speaks is making resources and support available to help our community weather this storm. We are in this together.





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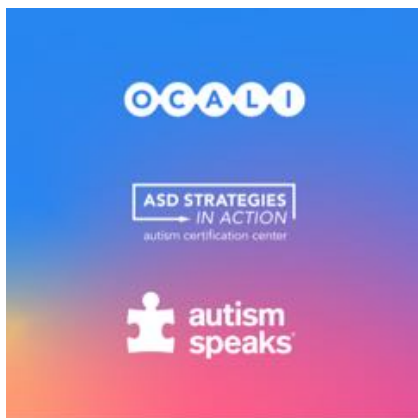
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# Information and Resources

- [Dealing with School Closures](#)
- [How to handle clinical care during social distancing and school/program closures](#)
- [What should the autism community know about the coronavirus outbreak?](#)
- Visit our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) channels, where we will regularly share the ideas we're hearing from throughout the community. For local information, join an [Autism Speaks Facebook Group](#) in your area.
- NEW April 9 - Autism Certification Center (ACC) and Autism Speaks are teaming up to make 30+ hours of [online video learning resources](#) available at no cost for the autism community.



# Information and Resources



[What Is  
Autism?](#)

[Help &  
Information](#)

[Our Work](#)

[Get  
Involved](#)

[Que es el  
autismo?](#)

[Donate](#) >

## Information by Topic

Autism Speaks is committed to providing the autism community with resources to meet each person and family's unique needs throughout every stage of life. To help with your search for support, we have organized our resources, information, expert advice and personal stories by category.

[Financial Planning](#) | [Safety](#) | [School](#) | [Technology](#)

[Health and Wellness](#) | [Behavioral Challenges](#) | [Medical Resources](#) | [Transition to Adulthood](#)

[Adults](#) | [Family Support](#) | [Community Life](#) | [Miscellaneous](#)



Thank You