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Supporting California Families During COVID-19 Through Advocacy

April 22, 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.

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autism speaks steps for kindness

April 25
1 p.m. EDT

Take 5,400 steps (alone or as a team) to help increase understanding and acceptance of the 1 in 54 U.S. children with autism.

Opening Ceremony at 1:00pm ET
Steps Send-off at ~1:15pm ET
RSVP to the Facebook Live Event

Agenda

Welcome

- Tracey MacDonald, Executive Director
  Field Development
  California

Federal Advocacy Update

- David Sitcovsky, Senior Director Policy and Federal Government Affairs

State Advocacy Update

- Judith Ursitti, Director State Government Affairs
- Melissa Cortez-Roth, Partner, Governmental Advocates

Community Outreach

- Marianne Sullivan
  Director Community Outreach

Challenges the Autism Community is Facing

- Abrupt discontinuation of educational services
- Closure of day programming
- Closure of clinics
- Shift to telehealth
- Lack of connection to community opportunities and suppor
- 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

Federal Advocacy Response

Federal COVID Legislation – What's already passed

MARCH 6: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations
Provides $8.3 billion in emergency funding for federal agencies to respond to the coronavirus outbreak (COVID 1)

MARCH 18: Families First Coronavirus Response Act (COVID 2)

- 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: Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act (COVID 3)
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

Implementation of the COVID bills - A few issues of note

- Economic Impact Payments and SSI
- Distribution of education dollars
- IDEA Waiver Report
- Emergency Paid and Family Leave

Federal COVID Legislation – Current State of Play

Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act (COVID 3.5)

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.
- Passed in Senate yesterday. Will be considered in the House tomorrow.

COVID 4/5

Additional Relief and Stimulus

- Timeline still TBD – House and Senate not back in session until May 4th, at earliest.
- What will be contained in these bills: **???**
  - Examples of potential items:
    - $ for the public health response
    - Additional economic relief for individuals and small businesses
    - $ for state and local governments
    - $ for education
    - Additional nutritional assistance
    - Housing assistance
    - USPS finances
    - Infrastructure investment

Our advocacy priorities during the COVID crisis

- Additional funding for home and community-based services (HCBS)
- Expanded access to telehealth services for health care needs
- 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
- 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 Smith and Doyle sent a letter to congressional leadership last week expressing some of our concerns and requests for additional support for people with autism.

State Advocacy Response

Sacramento Update

- Status of Legislative Session
- Budget Info

HEALTHCARE
HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES
SPECIAL EDUCATION/EARLY INTERVENTION

HEALTHCARE

California was approved for an 1135 emergency waiver by CMS, the federal Medicaid agency. This allows for a great deal of flexibility related to authorizations/benefits in Medicaid plans include the ability to:

- Waive certain provider screening requirements
- Allow out-of-state providers with equivalent licensing in another state
- Permit out-of-state providers to provide care to emergency state's Medicaid enrollee
- Allow service provision in alternative settings, including unlicensed facilities
- Suspend prior authorizations
- Require providers to extend pre-existing prior authorizations

Additional information can be found here.

HEALTHCARE - Telehealth Services

On March 18, 2020, the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) issued an All Plan Letter (APL 20-0092 directing all health plans to:

- Reimburse providers at the same rate, whether a service is provided in-person or through telehealth.
- For services provided via telehealth, not subject enrollees to cost-sharing greater than the same cost-sharing if the service were provided in-person.
- Provide the same amount of reimbursement for a service rendered via telephone as they would if the service is rendered via video.

DMHC clarifies in All Plan Letter (APL 20-0092 how providers should bill the services rendered via telehealth and that it applies to all types of services, including Applied Behavior Analysis, physical therapy and speech therapy, among others.

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HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is providing emergency flexibilities for Home and Community Based Waiver Services through Appendix K.

California's Appendix K application was approved by CMS on April 2, 2020

Developmental Disabilities Waiver

- Change service locations to allow services such as Day Services to be provided in the participant's home
- Modify provider qualifications if a participant decides to self-direct to an individual to provide a service
- Modify service plan development requirements for in-person attendance of service plan development and monitoring meetings, allowing telehealth
- Authority to make retainer payments for Habilitation, Behavioral: Intervention Services, and Day Services due to absences for this emergency

Special Education/Early Intervention

The California Department of Education has posted information on their website regarding the delivery of special education.

The state of California will be receiving funds from the COVID-3 stimulus package earmarked for education. It is critical that advocacy occur so that California students with autism receive appropriate supports and services, including but not limited to:

- Acquisition and dissemination of 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

We are meeting with the CDE this week. Please let us know your concerns!

Connect with us!

Sign up for advocacy alerts and emails and find your elected officials at www.autismspeaks.org/advocacy

Follow our advocacy profiles

| Autism Speaks Advocacy

| @AutismVotes

| @AutismVotes

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.

Contact our Autism Response Team

The Autism Response Team (ART) is an information line for the autism community. Our team members are specially trained to provide personalized information and resources to people with autism and their families.

How to contact ART

Call our toll-free number or send us an email – we're available between 9am and 5pm in all time zones. Live chat is also available between 9am and 5pm ET.

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

Utilize our Videos

How to handle school closures and services for your child with autism

March 13, 2020

We're Here to Help Chat with Us

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

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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