



autism speaks®

**Supporting Florida Families
During COVID-19 Through Advocacy**

May 7, 2020



Welcome

Katy Moreno

Senior Director, Field Development - North & Central Florida

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.

Local Field Staff Contacts

Local involvement, support a local event, or join your Autism Speaks Walk

South Florida Chapter (Palm Beach, Broward, Miami/Dade Counties, and Southwest FL)

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Natasha LaMonica, Manager, Field Development
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AutismSpeaksWalk.org
To register for your local Walk



COVID-Related Special Challenges

Kelly Headrick

Senior Director, State Government Affairs & Grassroots Advocacy

Challenges the Autism Community is Facing

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



Questions During the Webinar – General vs. Individual

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.

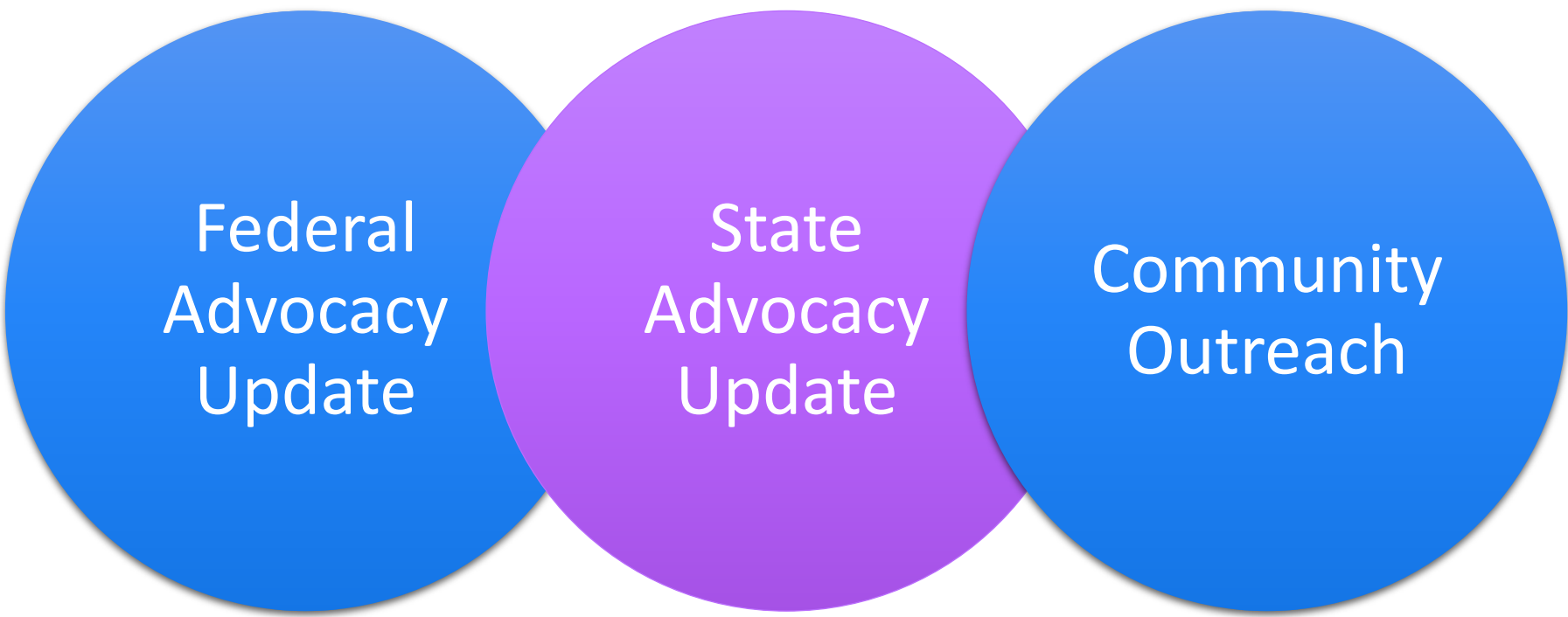
1-888-AUTISM2 (1-888-288-4762)

En Español: 1-888-772-9050

help@autismspeaks.org



Agenda



Federal
Advocacy
Update

State
Advocacy
Update

Community
Outreach



Federal Advocacy

Dave Sitcovsky

Senior Director, Policy & Federal Government Affairs

Federal COVID Legislation

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

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.

COVID 4/5

Additional Relief and Stimulus

Timeline still TBD – House will likely introduce/pass bill first – not back in session until at least next week.

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

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

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

One-pager is available for your meetings.



State Advocacy

James McFaddin, The Southern Group
& Kelly Headrick

Florida's State Budget and Selected Legislative Session Outcomes - James

- Legislative Session Over/Change of Schedule Tested for Election Years
- State Budget Health pre-COVID
- Some Autism-Related Session Outcomes:
 - ABA Provider Licensure Issue
 - SB 82 iBudget Program changes/Take Effect July 2021 (details next slide)

Florida's State Budget and Some Legislative Session Outcomes - James

- SB 82 iBudget Program Changes Details:
 - Eliminating the statutory criteria for authorizing supplemental funding for a client, and, instead, creating a standard definition of a “significant additional need” to judge supplemental funding requests and centralizing that process for consistency at APD HQ;
 - Requiring waiver support coordinators to be employed by qualified waiver support coordination agencies;
 - Requiring all service providers to bill for services and submit all required documentation through the agency’s electronic client data management system;
 - And, the Legislature included new money in the budget to fund additional slots in the iBudget program.



HEALTHCARE - Telehealth Services

- Medicaid – Coverage of autism-related services via telehealth has been authorized within Medicaid. Some providers are concerned about the updated health care codes and 30 day at a time service plans **[under iBudget only]**, and we are looking into that. For details on telehealth and more, https://ahca.myflorida.com/covid-19_alerts.shtml
- Private Insurance – The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) made this statement (not a mandate): “OIR believes innovative use of technology can combat spread of COVID-19 by allowing Floridians to remain in their homes without losing access to critical care. This memorandum encourages all health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and other health entities.” <https://www.floir.com/siteDocuments/OIR-20-06M.pdf>

HEALTHCARE/1135 MEDICAID WAIVER

Florida was approved for an 1135 emergency waiver by the federal agency CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services). This allows for a great deal of flexibility related to authorizations/benefits in Medicaid health plans including the ability to:

- Waive certain provider screening requirements
- Postpone deadlines for revalidation of providers
- Allow certain out-of-state providers to be utilized in Florida
- Allow service provision in alternate settings, including unlicensed settings
- Suspend fee for service prior authorization requirements
- Extend existing prior authorizations

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

HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES/APPENDIX K

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) developed the Appendix K to help states accelerate changes to their 1915(c) home and community-based services waiver operations or to request emergency amendments during a natural disaster or situations like the nation is facing in COVID-19.

Florida's Appendix K Applications were approved by CMS on April 17, 2020. You can find the relevant applications (two) here:

- <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/fl-0867-appendix-k-appvl.pdf>
- <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/fl-0962-appendix-k-appvl.pdf>

And this related summary from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities:

<https://apd.myflorida.com/covid19/docs/COVID-19%20Provider%20Guidance%20-%20Final%20April%202020.pdf>

HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES/APPENDIX K

Florida's approved Appendix K application allows for HCBS flexibilities including:

- Temporarily exceeding service limitations on certain lifeskills development and adult day training, as well as flexibility on the locations to hold these;
- Temporarily allowing for payment of personal supports and services when a covered individual must be in a hospital setting such as for COVID treatment;
- Retainer payments made to service providers in certain circumstances;
- Allowing a family member to be paid to render services to a covered individual;
- Allowing other practitioners in lieu of approved providers, in some cases;
- Allowing for virtual evaluations, assessments, and person-centered care planning sessions;
- Adjusting prior approval/authorization elements;
- Allowing adult day program staff to provide some services in the covered individual's home.

Special Education/Early Intervention/Transition

Florida will receive funds from the COVID-3 stimulus package/Education Stabilization Fund:

K-12	\$ 770 million
Governor's Discretionary	\$ 173 million

We are advocating that 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 for the school closure period
- Appropriate transition from early intervention to special education
- Services not received during the time of school closures and remote learning be made available in person at the earliest possible (safe) time
- Appropriate transition out of special education to adulthood

ADDITIONAL FLORIDA-SPECIFIC COVID RESOURCES:

- Florida Department of Health COVID-19 resource page:
<https://floridahealthcovid19.gov>
- Governor's resource page: <https://www.flgov.com/COVID-19>
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities website, with COVID-19 information specific to APD's iBudget waiver program right on the front page: <https://apd.myflorida.com>

Connect with us!

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

Follow our advocacy profiles



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Community Outreach

Janet Williams

Director, Community Outreach – Mid & South Atlantic

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.



Reminder: Contact our Autism Response Team

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Utilize our Videos

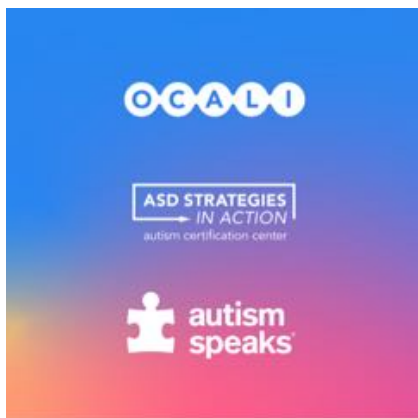
How to handle school closures and services for your child with autism

March 13, 2020



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](#)



Any Final Questions?

Thank You