

An Important Message from Autism Speaks

Racism and discrimination have no place in our society.

Deeply ingrained in the Autism Speaks mission is a commitment to creating a more equitable world for those we serve. The autism community is diverse and broad, including all races, ethnicities, abilities, socioeconomic groups, belief systems and identities.

We stand with our volunteers, our colleagues, our partners and every member of our community in speaking out against racism and speaking up for a world that is more inclusive and empathetic – where all people are respected, protected and valued.



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

August 19, 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



We've reimagedined the Walk – join us!

Find out how at autismspeakswalk.org



Minnesota Virtual Walk

Saturday, October 10, 2020

10 a.m.

CONTACT

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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.

Some of the Challenges the Autism Community is Facing

- Abrupt discontinuation of educational services
- Closure of day programming
- Closure of clinics and shift to telehealth
- Increased need for mental health supports
- Lack of connection to community opportunities and supports
- Community employment disruption
- Discontinuation of respite relief for families
- Disruption of much-needed routines
- Loss of income for families
- Challenging behaviors
- Access to healthcare with appropriate supports
- Uncertainty about in-person versus virtual learning



Autism Response Team (ART)

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 Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. in all time zones. Live chat is also available between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. 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

Who can call?

We are happy to talk with people with autism, parents, grandparents, friends, teachers, social workers, and everyone in between.

Even if you have no connection to autism but have a question, please feel free to reach out. We assist people of all ages, including children, teens, and adults with autism.

We're Here to
Help Chat with Us

Agenda

Welcome

Sarah Klapmeier
Senior Coordinator,
Field Development

Federal Advocacy Update

David Sitcovsky,
Senior Director,
Policy & Federal
Government Affairs

State Advocacy Update

Judith Ursitti,
Director, State
Government Affairs

Community Outreach

Colleen Shinn,
Director,
Community
Outreach



Federal Advocacy Response

Federal COVID Legislation – What's passed?

MARCH 6: COVID 1 – Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations

\$8.3 billion in emergency funding

MARCH 18: COVID 2 – Families First Coronavirus Response Act

Included *many* provisions affecting our community.

Of particular note – it provided emergency paid sick and family leave

MARCH 27: COVID 3 – Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

\$2 trillion in funding for a number of provisions affecting our community.

Of particular note – economic impact payments to most Americans; increased unemployment benefits; assistance for small businesses and employers; billions of dollars for schools; and extends the Money Follows the Person Program

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

Federal COVID Legislation – What's next?

COVID 4 – Ongoing Negotiations

MAY 15: House passed the Heroes Act - \$3 trillion relief package. The Senate did not indicate that it would take up this bill. Priorities that were included in the Heroes Act:

- Substantial increase in funding for home & community-based services (HCBS)
- \$100 billion for education (in addition to \$1 trillion in general assistance for state & local governments)
- Dependents over age 17 retroactively eligible for economic impact payments
- Eligibility for additional \$1,200 payments

JULY 27: Senate released a \$1 trillion relief package proposal. Priorities:

- All dependents eligible for additional \$500 economic impact payments
- \$105 billion for education

Path from here is unclear . . . both chambers are on recess until September 8th

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.



State Advocacy Response



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.

Until further notice, Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) is temporarily expanding coverage of telemedicine visits

([More information here.](#))

Telehealth Services

- Behavioral health, including applied behavior analysis
- Speech, occupational and physical therapy
- Psychological and psychiatric care

[Blue Cross Blue Shield Minnesota](#),
[HealthPartners](#) and [Medica](#) are all currently
covering telehealth services



Healthcare and Home and Community Based Services

When the President has declared an emergency or disaster and the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) has declared a public health emergency, the Secretary can use **Section 1135** authority to waive or modify certain Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP requirements to ensure that sufficient health care items and services are available to meet the needs of Medicaid enrollees in affected areas. Minnesota was approved for Section 1135 waivers by CMS on [March 27, 2020](#) and [May 8, 2020](#). These waivers:

- Allow provision of services in alternative settings
- Modify provider enrollment
- Temporarily suspend Medicaid fee-for-service prior authorization requirements
- Modify 1915(c) HCBS waiver Level of Care Determination and Redetermination Timeline
- Modify HCBS Settings requirements for specified settings
- Modify Conflict of Interest Requirements under HCBS State Plan and Waiver Authorities

Home and Community Based Services

Brain Injury Waiver, Community Alternative Care Waiver, Community Access for Disability Inclusion, Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Elderly Waiver

The amendments that the state requested in the **Appendix K** are effective from January 27, 2020 through January 26, 2021 and apply in all locations served by the individual waivers for anyone impacted by COVID-19.

[Appendix K - MN Combined](#)

[Appendix K - MN Combined 2](#)

[Appendix K - MN Combined 3](#)

[Appendix K - MN Combined 4](#)

[Appendix K - MN Combined 5](#)

[Appendix K - MN Combined 6](#)

[MN.0166 Appendix K](#)

[MN.0025 Appendix K](#)

Home and Community Based Services

Brain Injury Waiver, Community Alternative Care Waiver, Community Access for Disability Inclusion, Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Elderly Waiver

- Temporarily expand settings where services may be provided
- Temporarily increase payment rates
- Permit virtual evaluations, assessments, and person-centered planning meetings in lieu of face-to-face
- Add electronic method of service delivery to continue services remotely in home

Latest information about COVID-19 from Disability Services Division can be found [here](#).

Special Education/Early Intervention

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

K-12	\$ 142.3 million
Post-secondary	\$ 227.6 million
Governor's Discretionary	\$ 42.8 million

- 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, **including in-person services** provided as soon as is safe and feasible
- Appropriate transition out of special education to adulthood

Information about Minnesota's response to date can be found [here](#). Information about use of CARES Act funding can be found [here](#).

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](https://www.facebook.com/AutismSpeaksAdvocacy)



| [@AutismVotes](https://twitter.com/AutismVotes)



| [@AutismVotes](https://www.instagram.com/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.



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Information and Resources

- [Virtual Learning and Summer Activities](#)
- [Autism Speaks COVID19 Resources](#)
- [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.

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