

# ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM

Senator Uvalde Lindsey  
Co-Chair

Representative Mary Broadway  
Co-Chair

**TO: Senator Bill Sample, Co-Chair, Arkansas Legislative Council  
Representative David L. Branscum, Co-Chair, Arkansas Legislative Council**

**FROM: Senator Uvalde Lindsey and Representative Mary Broadway  
Co-Chairs, Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism**

**RE: REPORT OF THE AUTISM TASK FORCE**

**DATE: September 7, 2016**

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Pursuant to the provisions of Arkansas Code 10-3-2603, we are submitting the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism report for the twelve-month period from September 12, 2015 to August 31, 2016.

During the year, the following goals were accomplished by the Task Force:

- Expansion of insurance coverage by one major Arkansas employer through its self insurance plan (ERISA) to cover Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA).
- Continued to monitor the Use of Restraints in the Arkansas Public Schools.
- Improved communication of information about the Task Force by establishment of a page on the Arkansas Autism Resource and Outreach Center (AAROC) website.
- Encourage expanded support for the Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute and the UAMS Dennis Development Center for their research and clinical activities.
- Worked with Partners for Inclusive Communities and DHS to expand the Autism Medicaid Waiver program into the State Plan for Medicaid and remove the programmatic caps on enrollment.
- Endorsed the enactment of the Arkansas Works program for the delivery of an enhanced Medicaid program.
- Endorsed grant applications to establish centers for the delivery of behavioral services based on evidence-based best practices provide by collaborative teams using effective implementation practices. Special emphasis should be given to areas that are rural with high rates of poverty.
- Worked with Partners for Inclusive Communities, DHS and Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield to coordinate the level of benefits provided by both the public and private sector insurance providers.

- Encouraged the Department of Health to provide Milestone Moments, a publication of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to all new parents when birth certificates are mailed. The booklet is designed to help new parents with early diagnosis of developmental delay.
- Endorsed the adoption of peer-mediated support strategies in all public schools.

As the Task Force begins another year of working to help kids and family that are living with autism, we will continue the work set forth above and establish the following as our legislative priorities for 2017, as follows:

The legislative priorities to be presented to the 91<sup>st</sup> General Assembly include:

- Increase research funding to the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.
- Improve training programs offered to developmental professionals and school personnel.
- Improve the manner by which law enforcement and the community, through the Criminal Justice Institute, respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Revise drivers' licenses to identify drivers with Autism.

We hope you will find this information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact either of us, if you desire additional information.