

ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM

Senator Mary Ann Salmon
Co-Chair

Representative Uvalde Lindsey
Co-Chair

MEMORANDUM

**TO: SENATOR HENRY "HANK" WILKINS IV, CO-CHAIR,
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
REPRESENTATIVE ALLEN MAXWELL, CO-CHAIR, LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL**

**FROM: SENATOR MARY ANNE SALMON, CO-CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE UVALDE LINDSEY, CO-CHAIR
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON AUTISM**

**SUBJECT: REPORT OF THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON
AUTISM**

DATE: AUGUST 31, 2010

Pursuant to the provisions of Act 1272 of 2009, we are submitting the Report of the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism for your review. Act 1272 increased the membership and expanded the duties of the Legislative Task Force on Autism to examine how the State of Arkansas responds to autism and autism spectrum disorders. Currently, the membership includes more parents of children living with autism spectrum disorders and one elected official appointed by each the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Task Force is pleased with the autism waiver program development and the future expansion of screening services across the state. These programs are vital components of the long term strategy to address the needs of the developmentally disabled community.

The Task Force began meeting in August 2009 and resolved to continue building upon the accomplishments of the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism created by Act 1016 of 2007. The legislative priorities to be presented to the 88th General Assembly are as follows:

- Increase funding for the Home and Community Based (HCB) Medicaid Waiver Program to cover all eligible current and future applicants
- Continue funding of the Autism Medicaid Waiver Program
- Provide insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders per Interim Study Proposal 2009-155. The federal health care legislation will effect this priority.
- Build the capacity to diagnose and treat autism spectrum disorders within local communities
- Fund the Community-Based Autism Liaison and Treatment Project within the local communities as created by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and currently funded with federal stimulus money by the Department of Human Services
- Require school district administrators be properly informed of and properly disseminate federal educational rights and privacy act, FERPA, information and guidelines to parents and personnel having the right to know
- Provide block grants to school districts with the highest incidence rate of autism spectrum disorders to provide additional special education services
- Create a statewide voluntary registry program for citizens with a developmental disability
- Standardize the training opportunities regarding developmental disability recognition and interaction for law enforcement, dispatchers, fire fighters and emergency medical technicians
- Adopt federal laws and regulations relating to the use of restraints and seclusion for all students attending public schools in the state
- Expand the autism graduate certificate program at the University of Arkansas to include undergraduate students

- Continue the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism and provide per diem to non-governmental task force members

We hope you will find this information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact either of us or the staff person assigned to the Task Force, Mary Carol Roach, if

you have any questions or need additional information.

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