

**ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE
ON
AUTISM**

Senator Uvalde Lindsey
Mary Broadway
Co-Chair

Representative

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: August 28, 2015

Pursuant to the provisions of Act 1272 of 2009, we are submitting the Arkansas Legislative Task Force on Autism report for your review.

The Task Force is pleased to report that, through diligent efforts during the 90th General Assembly success was achieved on a number of priorities:

- Act 656 – U of A Partners for Inclusive Communities Autism Awareness Grant
 - Authorizes \$250,000 from the General Improvement Fund or its successor fund for the U of A Fayetteville Partners for Inclusive Communities Autism Awareness Supporting Grants
- Act 679 – Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) Arkansas Autism Waiver Program
 - Authorizes \$3,000,000 from the General Improvement Fund for DHS – DDS Autism Waiver Program
- Act 979 – Appropriation for Developmental Disabilities Services
 - Appropriated DDS to be payable from the DDS Services Fund Account \$273,974 for the 2015-2016 fiscal year
- Act 1008 – Requires DHS to Expand Capacity of the Autism Partnership
 - Changes the ages of children in the waiver program to include ages 18 months to 6 years old
 - Requires DHS to apply to add an additional 50 eligibility slots to the Medicaid Waiver no later than January 1, 2016 if funds are available

The legislative priorities to be presented to the 91st General Assembly include:

- Implementation of the Community First Choice Option and the elimination of the waiting list for DDS services
- Funding for the creation of the Rural Education in Autism program and pilot delivery centers
- Enact recommendations of the Legislative Task Force on Special Education
- Creation of a pilot program for Mental Health Crisis Intervention Centers
- Mandatory training on behavioral mental health for the Criminal Justice Institute
- 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.