

## **EXPANDING THE PROMISE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM ACT OF 2007**

On March 20, 2007, Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Wayne Allard (R-CO) introduced the Expanding the Promise for Individuals With Autism Act of 2007. This critical legislation provides approximately \$350 million to improve access to comprehensive treatments, interventions, and services for individuals with autism and their families. The Autism Society of America (ASA) strongly supports the Expanding the Promise for Individuals With Autism Act of 2007 and urges all Senators to cosponsor this important legislation.

### **THE SERVICE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM**

Our current service delivery system is unable to adequately support individuals with autism in their communities. Children with autism often face a significant delay receiving an appropriate diagnosis, and face an even greater delay accessing post-diagnosis treatments and interventions. Furthermore, there is a growing number of young and older adults with autism who need after-school, employment, health care, housing, and community support services. The Expanding the Promise for Individuals with Autism Act addresses these problems in many ways. Major provisions of the legislation include:

- **Treatments, Interventions, and Services Evaluation Task Force**  
The bill directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to convene a Treatments, Interventions, and Services Evaluation Task Force to evaluate evidence-based biomedical and behavioral treatments and services, and provide recommendations to Congress, the Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee, the National Institutes of Health, and others regarding ways to expand access to effective treatments and services nationwide.
- **Demonstration Grants for Coverage of Treatments, Interventions, and Services**  
The bill provides \$80 million over four years to establish a State based demonstration grant program to provide evidence-based autism treatments, interventions, and services, as identified by the Task Force.
- **Planning and Demonstration Grants for Services for Adults**  
The bill provides \$85 million to establish a grant program that includes a one-time, single year planning grant and a multiyear service provision demonstration grant program to increase access to appropriate services to adults living with autism.
- **Expanding Access to Post-diagnosis Care**  
The bill provides \$60 million to expand access to treatments, interventions, and services to children with autism, with the goal of providing and coordinating multi-agency, intensive, and comprehensive, evidence-based treatments, interventions and services.
- **National Training Initiatives on Autism**  
The bill provides \$77 million in supplemental grants to University Centers of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities to provide training, technical assistance, dissemination, and services. This includes grants to establish new centers in minority-serving institutions or states with underserved populations.

➤ **GAO Study On Service Provision and Financing**

The bill would require the Comptroller General of the United States to release a report that examines financing for autism services, current policies for public and private health insurance coverage, disparities in provision of services, and ways in which to improve financing of autism treatments, interventions, and services.

➤ **Emerging Needs Protection and Advocacy Program**

The bill provides \$40 million to make grants to protection and advocacy systems to address the needs of individuals with autism and other emerging populations of individuals with disabilities.

➤ **National Technical Assistance Center**

The bill provides \$10 million to establish and maintain a national technical assistance center to gather and disseminate information about autism treatments, interventions, and services, provide technical assistance, and establish and maintain a website.

## **ABOUT AUTISM**

Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, impacting development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Both children and adults with autism typically show difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and sensory processing.

Autism is the most common of the Pervasive Developmental Disorders, affecting an estimated 1 in 150 births (Centers for Disease Control Prevention, 2007). Roughly translated, this means as many as 1.5 million Americans today are believed to have some form of autism. And this number is on the rise. Based on statistics from the U.S. Department of Education and other governmental agencies, autism is growing at a startling rate of 10-17 percent per year. **At this rate, the Autism Society of America estimates that the prevalence of autism could reach 4 million Americans in the next decade.**

## **ABOUT THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF AMERICA**

Founded more than 40 years ago, ASA is the oldest and largest grassroots organization within the autism community. A leading source of information, research, and reference on autism, ASA has more than 120,000 members and supporters are connected through a working network of nearly 200 chapters nationwide. ASA is dedicated to increasing public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families and the professionals with whom they interact.

**For additional information about the Autism Society of America or its legislative priorities, please contact Lee Grossman at [lgrossman@autism-society.org](mailto:lgrossman@autism-society.org) or (301) 657-0881 (x105), or Sharon Scribner at [sscribner@sonnenschein.com](mailto:sscribner@sonnenschein.com) or (202) 408-9161.**