



AUTISM RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Autism is Treatable

Autism Research Institute Supports Nationwide Caregiver Efforts to Advocate for Appropriate Autism Treatments

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SAN DIEGO - The Autism Research Institute (ARI) applauds caregivers and advocates nationwide for their commitment to secure appropriate, individualized medical and educational intervention for individuals living with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs).

"Many individuals with autism suffer from apparently related medical conditions; these conditions are often ignored, and so are left untreated by the medical community. These children can improve significantly, and in some cases recover, if their medical needs are met," said ARI Director, Stephen M. Edelson, Ph.D.

A recent Harvard School of Public Health study by Dr. Michael Ganz estimates that the overall costs of caring for a person with autism are as much as \$3.2 million over his or her lifetime. These costs can be cut with intervention tailored to the individual's needs. With the Centers for Disease Control reporting an estimated 1 in 150 children with an ASD in the United States, reasonable solutions must be put in motion to stop the financial devastation of these families. The divorce rate among parents of autistic children is estimated to be much higher than the national rate; insofar as this is heightened by financial strain, proper solutions will stabilize communities as well as families.

Caregivers are confronting legislators nationwide, demanding answers in the face of this epidemic. Since the news broke that the government decided vaccines triggered autism in the case of nine-year-old Hannah Poling, who developed normally until she became sick and ultimately autistic after being given shots against nine infectious diseases simultaneously, parents have felt increasingly justified in their pleas for funding of combined medical and educational treatment approaches.

Last month, representatives from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) attended the Defeat Autism Now! Conference (a project of ARI) in Cherry Hill, NJ to commence discussion about the causes and effective treatment for autism and related disorders.

Lawmakers in key states have teamed with caregivers to create autism parity bills, meaning that autism would be given equal levels of service as other disorders. Such mandates might help distribute the costs of traditional therapies more fairly, across parents, society, and private insurers, but self-funded insurance plans used by large companies are typically exempt from such legislation, and language requiring funding for medically necessary treatments for the underlying co-morbid conditions remains absent.

Jane Johnson, Director of Defeat Autism Now!, adds, "It's heartbreaking that individuals with autism have been denied appropriate services. Once they get the right kind of treatment, they can begin to turn the corner. Autism is not psychological, and it's treatable. I'm very happy that a dialogue is now possible--the time to act is now."

For more information about autism, visit www.autism.com.

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The Autism Research Institute (ARI) is a non-profit organization established in 1967 that fosters scientific research on autism triggers as well as diagnostic, treatment, and prevention methods. Through its Defeat Autism Now! program, ARI provides research-based information to parents, clinicians, and researchers worldwide, through its Web site (autism.com), call center, parent groups, conferences, science-based publications, and think tanks.