Newsletter
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OREGON COMMISSION ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Identifying Autism Spectrum Disorders

Paving the way for implementation of SB365

Overview

Oregon's enactment of an autism insurance mandate for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) services SB 365 is expected to increase demand for timely, efficient and reliable autism diagnoses.

Requirements of Senate Bill 365

The law requires that coverage of ABA include certain stipulations such as:

- The diagnosis and treatment plan must be provided/approved by "a licensed neurologist, pediatric neurologist, developmental pediatrician, psychiatrist or psychologist who has experience or training in the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder."
- Insurers may require prior authorization, but must provide "a Prior Authorization Determination no later than 30 calendar days after receiving the request."

Setting the Standard

The Commission recommendations support the establishment of a reliable "gold standard" approach to promote effectiveness and positive outcomes for children and their families. The Commission recommendations are also designed to expand capacity by utilizing available expertise and personnel in both the medical and educational systems.

The work of setting a standard for the identification of ASD was initiated under the auspices of the Oregon Pediatric Society and continued by OCASD and its Screening, Identification and Assessment (SIA) Subcommittee. It has resulted in the following recommendations to help insurers meet the requirements of Senate Bill 365.

Recommendations for the Identification of ASD

- Ensure use of DSM criteria in both health care and education.
- Support medical/educational collaboration for the identification process.
- Support sharing of resources between communities.
- Increase statewide capacity so that long waiting lists for expert interdisciplinary evaluation in health care are eliminated and educational timelines are met.

It is important that a standard be developed that will result in a high degree of reliability between evaluators. This may be achieved by specifying the desired quality of the interdisciplinary team with emphasis on the collective knowledge and experience of the team members who may have varied professional roles.

Changes in Leadership



Cheryl Cisneros
Commission Chairperson

Cheryl is a strong advocate with more than 18 years of leadership experience and expertise dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Cheryl established a non-profit called FACTS in California and served as its Executive Director & President from 1996 to 2008. She is also the founder and Executive Director of Creating Opportunities, the Family Network for Marion, Polk & Yamhill Counties.

Cheryl is the mother of a young man with autism and has been involved with OCASD since its development, serving as support staff, subcommittee Chair and now Commission Chair.

Other Recent Additions

Dr. Pat Sublette
Commission Vice Chairperson

Rebecca Barnhart
Communications Coordinator

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Identifying Autism Spectrum Disorders continued

There are currently differences in the both process and criteria between and among systems in Oregon. For example, some families have to re-do evaluation steps in both settings, have long waits for medical evaluation, and are often "caught in the middle" when given different information in each setting.

Ideally a consistent process will allow for portability of the identification without need to repeat the evaluation. But identification is just the first step. Further medical workup for co-occurring conditions and treatments, and further education evaluation for services will need to be subsequently completed in the appropriate setting. Additionally, future steps in the process of developing a reliable standard for the identification of ASD should include the use of standardized and validated diagnostic tools across systems.

With these steps in place a diagnosing medical clinician may avoid replicating an evaluation that was completed in an education setting in accordance with these recommendations. Of course, clinicians have both the right and duty to use discretion when considering past history and information presented from other sources as appropriate to the situation. The intent of these recommendations is not to circumvent necessary evaluation, but to streamline it, so that children and their families are receiving consistent and reliable information relating to the identification of ASD. These recommendations were published in the Commission's December 2010 Report to the Governor and 10 year plan and are available on the Commission's website. Further details on SB 365 can be found here: https://olis.leg.state.or.us/LIZ/2013R1/Measures/Text/SB0365/Enrolled

OCASD Next Steps

While there are not enough interdisciplinary teams in both the healthcare and education systems in Oregon to provide accurate and timely identification as described in these recommendations, OCASD is working on a detailed plan to ensure that there are interdisciplinary teams throughout the state with adequate levels of expertise.

The Commission Seeks Volunteers

The Commission is looking for volunteers for our Adult Services Subcommittee.

We are interested in finding subcommittee volunteers who have experience in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or who are supportive of individuals who experience ASD, such as family members and service agency coordinators. We're also looking for one to two people who may be interested in chairing the Adult Services Subcommittee.

It's easy to get involved.

- Select the Subcommittee that aligns with your strengths and interests
- Download an electronic version of the OCASD Volunteer Application: http://www.orcommissionasd.org/images/uploads/OCASD_Committee_Volunteer_Application_2014_Fillable.pdf or email staff@orcommissionasd.org to request an OCASD Volunteer Application
- Return your completed Volunteer Application via email to staff@orcommissionasd.org or mail to OCASD c/o OCDD at 540 24th Place NE, Salem OR 97301

Thank you for supporting the Commission in this recruitment process. We are excited to reach potential new volunteers and look forward to reviewing your application!