

Statements from Legislators

Rep. Celeste:

"I would like to thank the Governor for following up on a commitment he made a year ago to do something about autism insurance coverage. This will be great news for the thousands of families who have struggled with the costs of paying for treatment that a family member has needed."

Rep. Garland:

"I am thrilled Governor Kasich made this important decision that will improve the lives of thousands of families across the State. I have met many families with amazing children who cannot get health insurance coverage. I am happy that as my term is coming to a close, these families can get the coverage they need and deserve. This will be a truly happy holiday for families of autistic children. "

Rep. Grossman:

"I am grateful to Governor Kasich for having the courage to make the right decision to provide this important coverage for the thousands of children who fall within the autism spectrum throughout Ohio. It has been heart-wrenching to hear testimony from these families who want their child to have the same opportunities as other children to succeed and be self-sufficient. As a state, it is paramount that we provide every child with the tools and services to help them succeed. I am proud that Ohio has made this important decision for our children and our families."

Rep. Terhar:

"As a former president and CEO, and current owner of small businesses, I applaud Governor Kasich for his courage and foresight in adding care for those afflicted with autism to Ohio's Essential Healthcare Benefit Plan. The governor has recognized the human cost to families, and the increasing financial burden to our educational system can only be alleviated by bold and decisive action now. It is to the governor's great credit that he has stepped forward and taken this action swiftly and decisively. The people of Ohio have been well served by their governor and his ability to ensure the future prosperity of our state."

Sen. Bacon:

"This decision will vastly improve the lives of children with autism, along with their families. Studies have shown that children with autism who receive early intervention have better outcomes in school and are able to function more independently. I applaud Governor Kasich for his decision to ensure that children with autism are able to access important services and treatment."

Sen. Jones:

“One in 88 children are diagnosed with an autism-spectrum disorder and that number is increasing every year. This growing trend highlights the need for the state to take action. We know that early detection and diagnosis is key, but too many cases go without proper treatment. I applaud Governor Kasich for enacting state policy today to rectify this problem. His compassionate decision will have a positive impact on families all across Ohio.”

Sen. LaRose:

“I would like to commend Governor Kasich for making the right decision for Ohio families and thank him for working closely with my colleagues and me in the legislature on this important policy issue. This decision is simply the right thing to do. Ohio's children will be able to access autism services they need while care has been taken to also keep premiums low.”

Sen. Lehner:

“The Governor’s decision to expand coverage for autism is both a compassionate and financially sound decision. As an increasing number of families deal with the heartbreak of autism the importance of early intervention is becoming more evident. The Governor’s decision will enable Ohio’s families to find help for their children immediately upon diagnosis and reduce the need for more costly services later in life.”

Sen. Manning:

“As an educator, I know that early detection and treatment for those with autism can make all the difference in their development. If we work to diagnose autism earlier and assist our families in developing a strategic plan, we can decrease autism’s impact exponentially. As this plan is implemented, the Governor can count on my full support. I know that many northeast Ohio families will benefit from these new policies and I remain a staunch advocate for them in the Statehouse.”

Sen. Seitz:

“With one in every 88 children being affected by some form of autism, it is clear that the demand for services and treatment exists in Ohio. Yet for far too many families in our state, meaningful treatment has been out of reach due to the associated costs. Today’s decision will provide these children with the tools and skills they need to lead successful, productive lives. I commend the Governor for his decision to do what is in the best interest of these children, especially when early intervention has been shown to have the greatest chance of success.”

Statements from Stakeholders

Autism Speaks

Lori Unumb, Vice President of State Government Relations

“Autism Speaks commends Governor Kasich for his bold leadership and his commitment to supporting the autism community of Ohio. Governor Kasich has listened to Ohio families impacted by autism and has responded decisively. Autism is a national public health crisis, and providing access to meaningful health insurance coverage for the treatment of autism is a fiscal and moral imperative. I think many of our nation’s governors understand this, so I urge them to take advantage of the time-sensitive opportunity to add autism benefits to their exchange plans, whether or not they plan to operate their own exchange or select their own benchmark.”

Ohio Children’s Hospital Association

Steve Allen, M.D., Chairman, Ohio Children’s Hospital Association Board of Directors

We applaud the governor’s decision to ensure children with autism will have access to coverage for the treatment, therapies and services they need. More than 50,000 Ohio families are affected by autism, and today’s announcement is surely a relief to those families who are struggling with affordability and access to care for their children. Providing coverage of early intervention and comprehensive services for children affected by autism will ensure that families have access to the care they need to better manage their children’s health, improve outcomes and help them live healthy, productive lives.

We are particularly pleased that the governor will include autism services as part of the Essential Health Benefit package that will be part of the federally managed health insurance exchange in Ohio.

As the governor said, Ohio is doing the right thing today, as Ohio joins 32 other states in guaranteeing the provision of autism services in health insurance.

Autism Society of Ohio

John Stacy, Executive Director

“We are grateful that the Governor is taking a huge step toward improved supports for families and individuals with autism here in Ohio. By including habilitative services, thousands of Ohio children will have access to services to help them learn, and keep or improve skills and functional abilities that they may not be otherwise developing.”

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

Shawn Henry, Executive Director

“We applaud today’s announcement and are excited to continue our work with the Kasich administration and legislative leaders across the state as we move forward with providing essential health services and supports for individuals with autism. This work will further Ohio’s role as a national leader and provider of meaningful change and development.”

Autism Society of Ohio

Marla Root, Chair of ASO Public Policy Committee and Parent

“We appreciate the work of so many to get us to where we are today. The governor, our legislative leaders, and business partners recognize the importance of autism and its affect on families here in Ohio by taking this significant step. Research shows that early intervention helps make a significant and lifelong difference in the lives of children with autism by improving social, cognitive and communication skills, and by helping families develop the unique skills they need to raise their children. The Autism Society of Ohio looks forward to working with the Governor’s office to implement these changes and to getting all Ohioans access to the services they need.

All Statements above from 12/21/12