

Excerpts from the Mandate Commission Report on SB09-244
Treatment of Autism

"There doesn't appear to be any dispute that autism spectral disorders are medically, economically and socially devastating for the patient, family and society as a whole if not diagnosed and treated appropriately. Currently the average age of diagnosis of autism in Colorado is 5 years and 2 months. The US Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics cannot hope to be successful with their early identification initiatives unless there is adequate access to affordable diagnosis and treatment. No physician likes to suspect or screen for a disease that doesn't have economically feasible treatments for their patients."

"It is very often the case that families have to have one parent stay out of work to care for a child with ASD. Many families end up filing for bankruptcy as a result. It seems that all of the above interested parties (families, private medical insurance carriers/insured, state government, the federal government, the educational system, charities, foundations supported by grants) would benefit from early diagnosis and treatment of this disorder. Certainly returning a parent to the workforce and potentially raising a child who can contribute to society, rather than depend on society to meet his or her needs seems the most productive approach."

"Included was information from a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study based on 2002 data from the National Survey of American Families which determined that the financial impact on families is substantial. According to the study, 40 percent of the families with disabled children who earned between two to three times the federal poverty level (between \$36,200 and \$54,300 for a family of four, for example) experienced at least one food hardship, including worrying that food would run out or skipping meals because of a lack of money. Fifteen percent of families with incomes at three or more times the federal poverty level (\$54,300 and up for a family of four) experienced housing instability, meaning they were unable to pay their rent or had to move in with others."

"Without adequate treatment, individuals with Autism are likely to remain mentally retarded or profoundly socially impaired. Research from the University of Connecticut found as many as 20% of individuals who received effective treatment at an adequate dose lost the diagnosis of any Autistic Spectrum Disorder after just 2 years of treatment. Sutera, S., Pandey, J. et al. (2007). Predictors of optimal outcome in toddlers diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, Vol 37(1), pp. 98-107."