

# Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Prevalence increasing at epidemic proportions: 1 in every 150
- As a society, we are not yet prepared to help people with autism live with equality, dignity and independence.
- Too few in the medical community have the knowledge to diagnosis autism at the earliest age.
- Too few schools have the personnel who can effectively educate students with disabilities.
- Too few employers are prepared to hire and support workers with autism

## Combating Autism Act

- President signed PL 109-416 last year
- Authorizes \$168 million in FY08, \$25 million more than FY07
  - 114.5 for NIH research into causes, diagnosis, early detection, intervention, and treatment
  - \$16.5 million for the CDC's Disabilities Surveillance and Research Program
  - \$37 million to HRSA to increase awareness, reduce barriers to screening and diagnosis, promote evidence-based interventions for individuals with autism, and train professionals to utilize valid and reliable screening tools to diagnose autism and provide evidence-based interventions

# Combating Autism Act

- President's budget contains no new money for CAA
- Urge Members of the Appropriations Committee to fully fund the Combating Autism Act

## Autism Services

- CAA good first step but
- Need access to more services and supports in the community, such as supported employment, education supports, respite, assistive technology, transitions, etc.
- Need more interdisciplinary training of professionals, such as educators, PTs, OTs, service providers, etc.
- Need to develop best practice models and effective interventions

# Autism Support Act

- Sen. Clinton (D-NY)
- authorizes funding for demonstration projects to expand services and supports for children and adults,
- interdisciplinary training of professionals who diagnose and treat individuals throughout their lifespan,
- GAO report on improving financing structure,
- other provisions to improve access to services for individuals with ASD and their families
- Draft bill still in development but hopes to introduce soon
- Need to educate Members of Congress about the needs

# Autism Support Act

- Need to educate Members of Congress about the needs
- Especially those on House and Senate Appropriations Committees and
- Senate Health Education and Pensions (HELP) and House Education and Labor Committees