



# Federal Legislative Activities in Autism

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# 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
- Parents don't know where to turn for information that they can trust

# Combating Autism Act

- President signed PL 109-416 in 2006
- Authorized \$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 and LEND

- Specifically authorizes Secretary of HHS to expand existing or develop new interdisciplinary Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) programs
- intent of Congress to provide each of the existing 34 LENDs additional funding to train developmental pediatricians, clinical psychologists, and other diagnosticians and interventionists in the coming year and begin to develop programs in States that do not have one.

# Combating Autism Act - HRSA

- Information dissemination through Federal Programs such as Medicaid (EPSDT), Head Start, Early Head Start, Part C, etc.
- Development of tools such as curriculum,
- An increase to continue and expand the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) programs.
- An increase is provided for research on evidence-based practices for interventions for individuals with autism and other DD
- RFAs expected soon!



# Combating Autism Act

FY 09 Authorization amounts:

- **\$129 million for NIH**
- **\$18 million for the CDC**
- **\$42 million to HRSA**
- **President's budget provides level-funding**
- **AUCD urging Congress to fully fund CAA**

# Expanding the Promise to Individuals with Autism Act

- **S. 937** - Sens. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Wayne Allard (R-CO)
  - 14 co-sponsors (4R, 1 I, 9D)
- **H.R. 1881** - Reps. Mike Doyle (D-PA) and Chris Smith (R-NJ)
  - 89 co-sponsors (20R, 69D)

# Expanding the Promise Act

- Demonstration and **planning** projects (in consultation with DD Councils) to expand services and supports for children and adults
- Grants to expand **access** to post-diagnosis care and to reduce delays in getting services
- Interdisciplinary **training** of professionals who diagnose and treat individuals (UCEDDs)
- GAO report on improving **financing** structure
- Legal **protection and advocacy** for individuals with autism



# Expanding the Promise Act

- Need more co-sponsors
- Especially Members of:
  - Senate **Health, Education, Labor and Pensions** (HELP) and
  - House **Energy and Commerce** Committees
- Asking for hearing and markup

# TEACH Act

- Teacher Education for Autistic Children Act of 2007 or TEACH Act
- H.R. 2390 introduced on May 17, 2007 by Rep. Smith (R-NY) and Doyle (D-PA) and 9 co-sponsors
  - referred to House Ways and Means Committee
- to increase the number of teachers and paraprofessional teaching assistants with expertise in autism spectrum disorders by providing a refundable tax credit for qualified education expenses of such teachers and paraprofessional teaching assistants



# Empowering Children with Autism through Education Act

- Establishes a task force to identify and disseminate evidence-based educational strategies and promising best practices
  - Rep. Yarmouth (D-KY) introduced H.R. 2609 on June 7, 2007
  - 22 co-sponsors
- Intended to integrate into reauthorization of NCLB Act



# Other Disability Issues for 2008

- Budget and Appropriations
- DD Act & Family Support
- Medicaid Rules
- Community Choice Act
- CLASS Act
- Direct Support Professionals
- WIA/Rehab Act
- Higher Ed Act
- ADA Restoration
- NCLB Reauthorization
- Wellness Act
- GINA

# AUCD Resources

- AUCD Public Policy – Autism page:  
[www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)
- [AUCD's Action Center](#) for
  - Action alerts and sample letters
- Read *In Brief* for legislative updates:  
<http://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=164>
- Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Autism Task Force: [www.c-c-d.org](http://www.c-c-d.org)
- Contact [kmusheno@aucd.org](mailto:kmusheno@aucd.org)