

**AUCD Celebrates [Autism Awareness Month](#)**

SILVER SPRING, MD (April 1, 2011) — April is [Autism Awareness Month](#) and the [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\)](#) joins others in the Autism community in celebrating this month focused on raising awareness of the needs of families and individuals affected by Autism and the research and training that is underway to address those needs. AUCD is taking action by providing cutting edge information news, events, and resources. AUCD's network of nonprofit university-based interdisciplinary centers which include: 67 [University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities \(UCEDD\)](#); 39 [Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities \(LEND\)](#) programs; and 15 [Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers \(IDDRC\)](#) work in every state and territory to advance policy and practice for people living with disabilities and their families. Although significant progress has been made over the past few years a great deal more needs to be done in developing appropriate services and supports for children, adolescents and adults and their families. Many more professionals need training in the most recently developed scientific findings and interventions. Research needs to continue in the search for understanding the wide range of impacts and possible causes of Autism. The prevalence of autism and related developmental disabilities has increased dramatically in recent years with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates showing that one in every 110 children are affected.

“AUCD provides daily news and updates through the [Interdisciplinary Technical Assistance Center \(ITAC\)](#), collaborates with the CDC/National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)/Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) on the [Learn the Signs. Act Early. Campaign](#), and hosts free national [webinars](#) with world-renowned researchers such as Dr. Catherine Lord and Dr. Rebecca Landa,” says Dr. George Jesien, AUCD Executive Director.

AUCD and other advocates are meeting with key members of the House and Senate this week to urge the introduction of a bill to reauthorize the Combating Autism Act (PL 109-4160, which expires in September of this year if no action is taken. This law has shown significant progress in identifying possible causes and in increasing the capacity of professionals to screen, diagnose, treat and support individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). These efforts must continue. Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) has agreed to sponsor a bill to reauthorize the law in the new Congress. Representatives Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Mike Doyle (D-PA) are developing a bill on the House side. AUCD urges the Congress to act quickly to extend this important law to continue its vital activities. During April and throughout the year, AUCD strives to educate Members of Congress, the AUCD national network, and the general public about autism and developmental disabilities. For more information about [AUCD's autism activities](#) visit AUCD at [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)