

Commissioner Morrissey's Special Message:



Greetings,

We are pleased to announce that as of Monday, December 18th, the state Medicaid Agency has filed the application for the Autism Waiver to the Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS). DMR has worked closely with the State Medicaid Office to get the Waiver ready for submission.

Over the course of this past year, many people have worked to develop this Waiver and I would like to thank them for their efforts. Mass Advocates for Children and Advocates for Autism of MA (AFAM) helped to coordinate a working group of professionals from across the autism community who provided valuable input and feedback throughout this Waiver process. I would also like to recognize the efforts of the Health and Human Services staff and the legislative community who have dedicated time and energy to this endeavor.

This Autism Waiver went to CMS as a 1915c Home and Community Based Waiver as mandated by the Massachusetts state legislature. CMS has 90 days to respond to this Waiver application. In the course of that time, CMS could and will likely come back with questions for us to address.

Two million dollars of the Autism Division's budget is targeted to provide services for a small group of young children through this Autism Waiver, if approved by CMS. The Waiver is intended to:

- Provide intensive in-home behavioral supports to children who demonstrate a level of need as determined by a standardized assessment
- Serve approximately eighty children up to age eight with a verified diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder
- Provide services to children who are Medicaid eligible

This Waiver will be managed by the Autism Division at DMR. The Division will hire two Autism Clinical Managers to provide clinical supports, technical assistance, oversight and monitoring for participants. The seven state funded Autism Support Centers will have identified staff that will provide individual support and assistance to families in accessing services through the Waiver program.

Now is **not** the time to apply for enrollment in the Autism Waiver. We will publicly notify families when we are ready to accept applications. We will be doing an extensive outreach effort over the winter.

The Division is still a new entity within DMR and therefore it is important to remember that change happens incrementally over time. The Division has accomplished a lot in a short period of time, but I am aware that it still has growing to do in order to provide the array of supports needed by families of children with autism spectrum



Program Plans for Fiscal Year 2007

The remaining one million dollars is slated for continued staffing at the seven state funded Autism Support Centers and a variety of programs and community based services. The ideas for these programs in the Autism Centers and in the broader community came from the feedback that families and other stakeholders provided throughout this past year.

- DMR will continue to fund the additional staff positions at the seven state funded Autism Support Centers.
- The Autism Centers will receive one-time allocations to create social skills programs, sensory integration programs and vacation camps for children and their families. These programs will be in the late fall and run through June. Please contact your local Center for more details.
- On a broader community level the Division will continue to fund the Pediatrician Awareness Project that includes trainings and conferences for pediatricians, general family doctors, nurse practitioners and nurses.
- The statewide First Responders Training of Fire, Police, EMTs and Emergency Room Personnel will continue with the support of the Autism Division.
- The Asperger's Association of New England will continue their efforts to do more outreach to Hispanic communities across the Commonwealth.
- The statewide Autism Resource Guide will continue to develop and the Information and Referral Section should be printed early in 2007.
- Melmark New England will continue their training efforts and will add parent trainings at each Autism Support Center.

State Funded Autism Support Centers:

Autism Alliance of MetroWest

Serving: MetroWest
Phone: 508-652-9900
Website: www.autismalliance.org

Autism Resource Center

Serving: Central Massachusetts
Phone: 508-595-9101
Website: www.arccm.org

The Autism Support Center

Serving: Northeast
Phone: 978-777-9135
Website: www2.shore.net/~nsarc/Home.htm

Community Autism Resources

Serving: Southeast
Phone: 508-379-0371
Website: www.community-autism-resources.org



Community Resources for People with Autism

Serving: Western Massachusetts
Phone: 413-529-2428
Website: www.theassn.org/crautismindex.htm

TILL: Autism Support Center

Serving: Greater Boston
Phone: 781-302-4600
Website: www.tillinc.org/index.htm

The Family Autism Center

Serving: Norfolk County/South West
Phone: 781-762-4001
Website: <http://www.sncarc.org/autism.html>

For more information on the Autism Division:

Contact: Cariann Harsh, 617-624-7769 or
via e-mail: Cariann.Harsh@state.ma.us