

March 1, 2012

The Honorable Jim Marleau
Chairman, Senate Health Policy Committee
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909

Gene Michalski
President and Chief Executive Officer

Dear Senator Marleau:

On behalf of the Beaumont Health System, I am writing to urge your support for Substitute Senate Bills 414 and 415 to provide insurance coverage to treat children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. The following are the reasons Beaumont supports this legislation based on our own programs that provide Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and the fact that Beaumont covers treatment costs through our own employee health insurance program.

- The success rate of using evidence-based applied behavioral therapy to treat children with autism shows that a large percentage of children show dramatic improvement in their behavior and social skills to the point where they will not require special education programs, or will require much less support than their peers who do not receive intensive intervention. This is a savings to all taxpayers.
- Experience from other states that provide insurance coverage for autism treatment show lifetime savings of \$2 million for each child who benefits from evidence-based treatment.
- The legislation assures that only psychologists and physicians who are appropriately certified in ABA can be reimbursed for providing services, assuring the integrity and cost effectiveness of the program.
- Both Eastern Michigan University and Western Michigan University have graduate programs in ABA, but most of their graduates leave Michigan to find employment in states that provide insurance coverage for autism. We will be able to keep these graduates in Michigan once they can be reimbursed for autism treatment.
- Finally, we know we can help children with autism by providing ABA services. Although there are long-term cost savings, the most important thing is that we can improve the dynamics of daily living in families with an autistic child, both in the home and for the parent in the workplace. The short-term and long-term benefits of ABA are priceless in improving the well-being of autistic children and their families.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Gene Michalski