

**Senate Health Policy Committee**  
**March 1, 2012**

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- MSMS has a long standing policy of not supporting health insurance mandates. However, on January 18, 2012 the MSMS Board voted unanimously to support Senate bills 414 and 415.
- This was done for compelling reasons:
  - Autism is a complex disorder that affects 15,000 children with approximately 1000 additional children being diagnosed annually.
  - This is a higher incidence of pediatric cancers, pediatric AIDS, and type I diabetes combined.
  - It is the only chronic care condition and only catastrophic one not covered by insurance.
  - Since there is overwhelming evidence that the prognosis which is the ability of the child to function improves dramatically with early treatment, it is essential to begin treatment as soon as the diagnosis is made frequently beginning at age two.
  - If done this early 47-50% will have normal function and 40% have significant improvement.
  - In many cases treatment cannot be instituted because of lack of insurance coverage.
  - Many school systems do not have adequate therapy and are not prepared for this. Dedicated therapists are necessary and are not present in states without insurance in reasonable numbers such as Michigan.
  - Our Board feels the only way that these children will have the necessary treatment available to them is to have insurance coverage.
  - The purpose of the legislation is to correct the present situation.
  - We also are comfortable with the diagnostic parameters for the entity and that the treatment is evidenced based. The diagnosis and treatment are not simply theories but have been scientifically proven.
  - Speech, behavior and occupational therapy can be performed with all having a research base.
  - We fail to see why Michigan is not in line with other states when 29 have passed similar legislation and 10 are pending.
  - We are an organization that advocates for what is best for the patients of Michigan.
  - From the perspective of physicians who treat patients we feel it is essential that insurance cover autism so children can be treated as early as possible and achieve the best possible results.