



**MAAC**

# Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee

The Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee (MAAC) was created by House Bill 1125 (2011 Regular Session) as the Legislature recognized an urgent need for strategies on how to best identify, treat, educate, accommodate and employ people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and assist their families. The Committee is required to produce an annual report.

## **Actions Needed:**

### **MAAC recommends to the Mississippi State Legislature**

- Pass legislation that requires public school districts to conduct annual in-service training on Autism Spectrum Disorders and related evidence-based interventions and education.
- Pass legislation creating an Office of Autism Services (OAS). This entity shall coordinate ASD efforts among primary agencies that serve Mississippi's population of children and adults with ASD and their families.
- Pass legislation that requires a pilot program in a minimum of one Mississippi school district to reduce harm relating to eloping and wandering characteristics of some individuals with autism and other disabilities.

## **Did you know?**

- ASD now affects 1 in 54 children and 1 in 38 boys. In 2012, 1 in 68 children were affected.
- Boys are 4.3 times more likely than girls to have ASD.
- ASD-related costs in the U.S.: \$175-196 billion for adult services and \$61-66 billion for children.
- ASD costs a family \$69,000 a year on average.
- ASD is the fourth most prevalent diagnosis in children aged three (3) to seventeen (17) years.
- 70% of children with ASD have one comorbid developmental or psychiatric condition.

## **Actions Taken:**

- 2011 - HB 1125 – Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee (MAAC)
- 2014 - HB 542 – State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board Task Force
- 2015 - HB 885 – Autism Insurance Coverage Requirement

### **Expansion of Autism Related Efforts**

- 2016 - Mississippi Division of Medicaid Autism Spectrum Services Coverage
- 2018 – Insurance Commission Hotline
- 2018 – Insurance Raises Age of Coverage
- 2018 - Mississippi Division of Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver Renewal
- 2019 – Mississippi Division of Medicaid Amendment to State Plan Autism Spectrum Disorder

The growing number of Mississippians diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and the family's need for supports throughout their lifespan suggest these additional actions. Providing required evidence-based training to public school employees and establishing an Office of Autism Services will lay the critical foundation for early access to care, access to supports for the families, as well as lead to long-term saving for the state of Mississippi.

The 2021 Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee Annual Report will be sent electronically to each member of the legislature.