
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO CONDUCT A STUDY
ON REQUIRING INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE DIAGNOSIS AND
TREATMENT OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS.

1 WHEREAS, autism is a complex developmental disability that
2 is considered a spectrum disorder by health care professionals
3 as individuals with autism spectrum disorders may share common
4 symptoms with others similarly diagnosed, but the severity of
5 their conditions can vary widely across the spectrum; and
6

7 WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders currently include
8 autistic disorder, Asperger syndrome, and pervasive
9 developmental disorder not otherwise specified, which is also
10 known as atypical autism; and
11

12 WHEREAS, those affected by an autism spectrum disorder
13 usually show such symptoms as delays or difficulties with social
14 interaction and interpersonal skills and verbal and non-verbal
15 communication, and repetitive or obsessive behavior; and
16

17 WHEREAS, symptoms of an autism spectrum disorder generally
18 begin before the age of three and can persist through adulthood;
19 and
20

21 WHEREAS, health care professionals advise that early and
22 intensive treatment efforts, especially applied behavior
23 analysis, may greatly assist with developmental disabilities
24 related to autism spectrum disorders and prevent an affected
25 individual from becoming permanently dependent on family members
26 or a lifelong ward of the State; and
27

28 WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorders are becoming
29 increasingly prevalent in Hawaii, and treatment for these
30 disorders places a huge financial burden on Hawaii families as
31 treatment is not presently covered by Hawaii health insurers;
32 and
33



1 WHEREAS, extending insurance coverage to the diagnosis and
2 treatment of autism spectrum disorders would provide much needed
3 assistance to affected Hawaii families and improve the potential
4 for those with an autism spectrum disorder to live a more
5 productive life; and
6

7 WHEREAS, the potential benefits to individuals with an
8 autism spectrum disorder and their families, would equally
9 benefit the State by creating long-term savings as a result of
10 positive treatment outcomes that would seem to outweigh the
11 short-term costs; and
12

13 WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 2631, S.D.2, introduced in the
14 Regular Session of 2012, proposes to require insurance coverage
15 for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders by
16 accident and health or sickness insurers, mutual benefit
17 societies, and health maintenance organizations; and
18

19 WHEREAS, twenty-nine states currently require that health
20 insurers provide coverage for the treatment of autism spectrum
21 disorders, and there is now cost data available to study the
22 effect on insurance premiums of providing such treatment; and
23

24 WHEREAS, in 2010, the federal Patient Protection and
25 Affordable Care Act was enacted, which requires that health
26 insurance exchanges offer insurance coverage for essential
27 health benefits, including behavioral health treatment; and
28

29 WHEREAS, in 2009, the Auditor submitted a report to the
30 Governor and the Legislature entitled *Study of the Social and*
31 *Financial Impacts of Mandatory Health Insurance Coverage for the*
32 *Diagnosis and Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders*, an issue
33 which the Senate Committee on Ways and Means recently requested
34 the Auditor to revisit in consideration of the services proposed
35 by Senate Bill No. 2631, S.D.2, Regular Session of 2012, and the
36 changes to insurance coverage required by the Patient Protection
37 and Affordable Care Act; now, therefore,
38

39 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
40 Twenty-sixth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
41 of 2012, that the Legislative Reference Bureau is requested to:
42

- 43 (1) Assess the impact of the Patient Protection and
44 Affordable Care Act on the proposal in Senate Bill No.



- 1 2631, S.D. 2, Regular Session of 2012, to require
2 insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of
3 autism spectrum disorders by accident and health or
4 sickness insurers, mutual benefit societies, and
5 health maintenance organizations;
6
- 7 (2) Analyze the cost of providing insurance coverage for
8 autism spectrum disorders in Hawaii, based on actual
9 cost effects experienced in other states that require
10 such coverage, to the extent of available information;
11
- 12 (3) Report information on the recommended clinical
13 guidelines made by medical societies, such as the
14 American Academy of Pediatrics, for the treatment of
15 autism spectrum disorders; and
16
- 17 (4) Provide information on the reported clinical
18 effectiveness of treatments for autism spectrum
19 disorders that are covered by insurance in states that
20 mandate coverage for autism treatments; and
21

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference
23 Bureau is requested to report its findings and recommendations,
24 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
25 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
26 of 2013; and
27

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
29 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Legislative
30 Reference Bureau, the Insurance Commissioner, and the Director
31 of Health.

