

W. H. A.

Memorandum Date: March 22, 2010
Order Date: April 7, 2009

AGENDA DATE: April 7, 2009

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Health & Human Services

PRESENTED BY: Rob Rockstroh

AGENDA TITLE: IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF APRIL AS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN LANE COUNTY



I. MOTION

In the Matter of Proclaiming the Month of April as National Autism Awareness Month in Lane County.

II. ISSUE OR PROBLEM

Organizations throughout Oregon and the United States recognize the month of April as Autism Awareness Month, an opportunity to raise public awareness about Autism, a complex developmental disability, and foster a better understanding of this "spectrum disorder" and the importance of early identification and intervention.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Background / Analysis

Autism typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause for autism, but increased awareness and funding can help families today.

In February 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued their Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) autism prevalence report. The report, which looked at a sample of 8 year olds in 2000 and 2002, concluded that the prevalence of autism had risen to 1 in every 150 American children, and almost 1 in 94 boys. The issuance of this report caused a media uproar, but the news was not a surprise to the Autism Society or to the 1.5 million Americans living with the effects of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Nonetheless,

the spotlight shown on autism as a result of the prevalence increase opens opportunities for the nation to consider how to serve these families facing a lifetime of supports for their children.

Currently, the Autism Society estimates that the lifetime cost of caring for a child with autism ranges from \$3.5 million to \$5 million, and that the United States is facing almost \$90 billion annually in costs for autism (this figure includes research, insurance costs and non-covered expenses, Medicaid waivers for autism, educational spending, housing, transportation, employment, in addition to related therapeutic services and caregiver costs).

Know the Signs: Early Identification Can Change Lives

Autism is treatable. Children do not "outgrow" autism, but studies show that early diagnosis and intervention lead to significantly improved outcomes.

Here are some signs to look for in the children in your life:

- Lack of or delay in spoken language
- Repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g., hand-flapping, twirling objects)
- Little or no eye contact
- Lack of interest in peer relationships
- Lack of spontaneous or make-believe play
- Persistent fixation on parts of objects

Every person, regardless of ability, has valuable strengths, infinite capacity to learn and the potential to make important contributions to their local and state communities. People with autism in Oregon share with the state's other residents the right to live life as they choose in their education, jobs, recreation and homes.

In particular, families deserve our admiration and recognition for their caring commitment and ongoing support that are both essential to an independent and productive life for people with autism, particularly children.

A photographic exhibit focusing on children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities and their families will be displayed during the month of April, in the gallery outside Harris Hall in the Public Service Building.

B. Alternatives / Options

1. To recognize and support National Autism Awareness Month in Lane County.
2. Not to recognize and support National Autism Awareness Month in Lane County.

C. Recommendation

To approve number one above.

D. Timing / Implementation

Upon Board action, April 2010 will be declared National Autism Awareness Month in Lane County.

IV. ATTACHMENTS

Board Order

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, LANE COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION:) IN THE MATTER OF PROCLAIMING THE MONTH OF APRIL
) AS NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH IN LANE
) COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control estimates that about 1 in 110 children (an estimated prevalence of about one percent) have Autism Spectrum Disorder; and,

WHEREAS, autism is a complex developmental disorder that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others; and,

WHEREAS, recent studies have estimated that the lifetime cost to care for an individual with an autism spectrum disorder is \$3.2 million dollars; and,

WHEREAS, Autism is treatable in that children do not outgrow autism but early diagnosis and intervention lead to significant improvement; and,

WHEREAS, knowing the signs of autism and early identification can change lives; and,

WHEREAS, we all can become educated, help to identify and bring early intervention to the children in our lives who may have autism; and,

WHEREAS, every person, regardless of ability, has valuable strengths, infinite capacity to learn and the potential to make important contributions to their local and state communities; and,

WHEREAS, families deserve our admiration and recognition for their caring commitment and ongoing support that are both essential to an independent and productive life for people with autism and other developmental disabilities; and,

WHEREAS, the month of April has been designated National Autism Awareness month, with advocacy groups and organizations nationwide undertaking public awareness, and educational activities.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lane County Board of Commissioners proclaim April, 2010 as National Autism Awareness month in Lane County and encourage residents to become educated about this developmental disability, learn to identify the early signs of the disorder and bring help to affected children and their families.

Dated this _____ day of April 2010.

William A. Fleenor, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners