



Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer
Director

December 31, 2014

Michael Marshall
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol Building
LOCAL

Carmine Boal
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
LOCAL

Dear Mr. Marshall and Ms. Boal:

Enclosed please find the Autism Support Program Annual Report.

This report was prepared pursuant to 2013 Iowa Acts, Chapter 138, Sections 82-85, (Iowa Code section 225D).

This report is also available on the Department of Human Services website at <http://www.dhs.iowa.gov/Partners/Reports/LegislativeReports/LegisReports.html>.

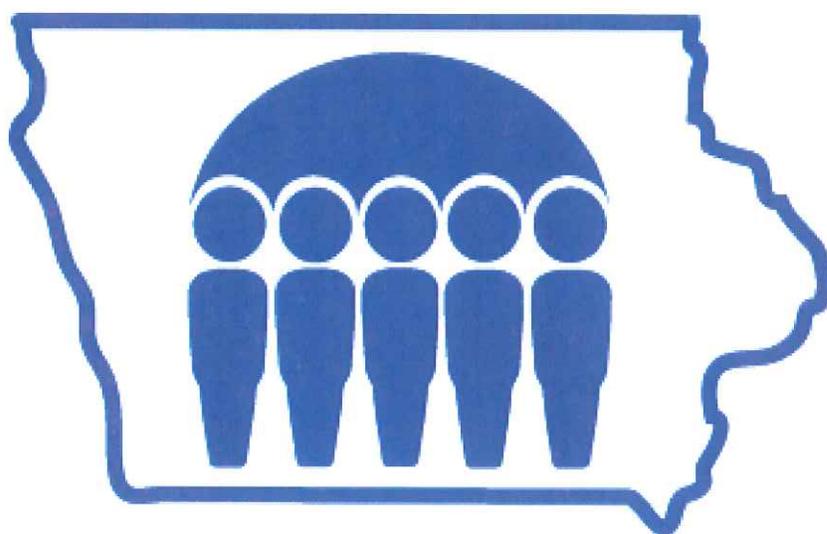
Sincerely,

Jennifer Davis Harbison
Policy Advisor

Enclosure

cc: Governor Terry E. Branstad
Senator Jack Hatch
Senator David Johnson
Representative David Heaton
Representative Lisa Heddens
Legislative Services Agency
Aaron Todd, Senate Majority Staff
Josh Bronsink, Senate Minority Staff
Carrie Malone, House Majority Staff
Zeke Furlong, House Minority Staff

Iowa Department of Human Services



Autism Support Program Annual Report

December 2014

Autism Support Program Annual Report

Executive Summary:

The Iowa Legislature created the Autism Support Program (ASP) in 2013 Iowa Acts, Chapter 138, Sections 82-85, (Iowa Code section 225D). The Autism Support Program (ASP) is to provide funding for applied behavioral analysis services for children under the age of 9 who meet certain diagnostic and financial eligibility criteria. The legislation requires the Department to submit an annual report no later than January 1 of every year regarding implementation of the Autism Support Program.

The Department issued a request for proposal (RFP) for administration of the ASP in November 2013. Magellan of Iowa (Magellan) was the sole bidder and was awarded the administrative contract in January 2014. The program began accepting applications April 1, 2014. As required by Iowa Code, the Department promulgated rules for the ASP which took effect April 1, 2014. Included in this report is a summary of the services provided in SFY14 by the ASP and recommendations for continued operation of the program, as required by legislation.

Introduction:

The Iowa Legislature created the Autism Support Program in 2013 Iowa Acts, Chapter 138, Sections 82-85, (Iowa Code section 225D). An excerpt from the legislation is below.

Sec.83. NEW SECTION . 225D.2 Autism support program — fund.

1. The department shall implement an autism support program beginning January 1, 2014, to provide payment for the provision of applied behavioral analysis treatment for eligible individuals. The department shall adopt rules, including standards and guidelines pursuant to chapter 17A to implement and administer the program. In adopting the rules, standards, and guidelines for the program, the department shall consult with and incorporate the recommendations of an expert panel convened by the regional autism assistance program to provide expert opinion on clinically relevant practices and guidance on program implementation and administration. The expert panel shall consist of families of individuals with autism; educational, medical, and human services specialists, professionals, and providers; and others with interest in or expertise related to autism. The program shall be implemented and administered in a manner so that payment for services is available throughout the state, including in rural and under-resourced areas.

The legislature appropriated two million dollars in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014 to fund the program beginning January 1, 2014. The legislature appropriated three million dollars in SFY 15, and also allowed carryforward to SFY 15 of the funds unspent in SFY14. \$1,987,587 was carried forward to SFY15.

Overview of progress:

Iowa Code section 225D requires the annual report to address the following items for the preceding fiscal year:

1. The total number of applications received under the program for the immediately preceding fiscal year.

Magellan received 14 applications in SFY14.

2. The number of applications approved and the total amount of funding expended for reimbursements under the program in the immediately preceding fiscal year.

Magellan approved 7 applications in SFY14. The remaining applications were denied for the following reasons: 3 were Medicaid-eligible, 1 had coverage through third-party insurance, 1 was over income guidelines, and 1 was over the age limit.

\$11,284.16 was expended for reimbursement to ABA service providers.

3. The cost of administering the program in the immediately preceding fiscal year. \$1,128.42 was expended for administrative costs.

4. The number of eligible individuals on a waiting list, if any, and amount of funding necessary to reduce the existing waiting list.

No individuals are currently on a waiting list due to funding. Within individual provider agencies, individuals may be on waiting lists due to lack of provider capacity, but funding is sufficient to serve all eligible individuals at this time.

ASP funds are limited to individuals who meet a specific set of criteria. This criteria includes limitations based on diagnosis, source of diagnosis, age of applicant, financial status of the applicant's family, and services provided by an eligible Applied Behavior Analyst (ABA) provider. The Department and Magellan have had regular meetings with the University of Iowa Regional Autism Program (RAP) Expert Stakeholder Panel, comprised of providers, advocates, and family members of children with a diagnosis of autism to discuss the implementation of the ASP.

Members of this group have expressed concern about the lack of available providers in the ASP network. Magellan states that they have reached out to the approximately 50 board-certified behavior analysts in Iowa to invite them to join the ASP network, but many are not available to provide ABA to children in community-based settings. Magellan has a network of eight ABA providers, with one provider having locations in four communities.

Advocates have expressed concern with the lack of access to ABA services in certain parts of the state and have proposed increased access to telehealth services as a way

to address this gap. Magellan has communicated to the providers and advocates that telehealth is an accepted form of service delivery. To date, no treatment plans that include telehealth as a method of service delivery have been submitted to Magellan. Providers will continue to be encouraged to use all available resources to serve children outside of their geographical areas.

Another concern raised by stakeholders is the requirement that the diagnosis of autism required for ASP eligibility must be provided by a child psychiatrist, developmental pediatrician, or clinical psychologist. It is reported by those seeking diagnostic services that there are significant delays in scheduling evaluations with these specific professionals, leading to delays in the ability of a family to apply for ASP funds.

Advocates also expressed concern about the age requirement that the individual be less than 9 years of age at time of application as potentially excluding older children who could benefit from the program. The Department does not have data to support this opinion, but agrees that some families of older children might apply if the program was available to them.

The RAP program is also working to encourage those professionals that work with young children diagnosed with autism to refer them to the RAP program so that they can be connected with the ASP or other appropriate services. The RAP program has care coordinators located at Child Health Specialty Clinics across the state to assist families with access to services and supports.

Recommendations:

The Department recommends that the program continue to operate under its current structure, with continued work by Magellan and stakeholder groups to publicize the program to families of children with a diagnosis of autism and to professionals who work with children who have, or are at risk of, a diagnosis of autism.