



# Iowa Department of Human Services

Terry E. Branstad  
Governor

Kim Reynolds  
Lt. Governor

Charles M. Palmer  
Director

December 30, 2013

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 Senate File 446.

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

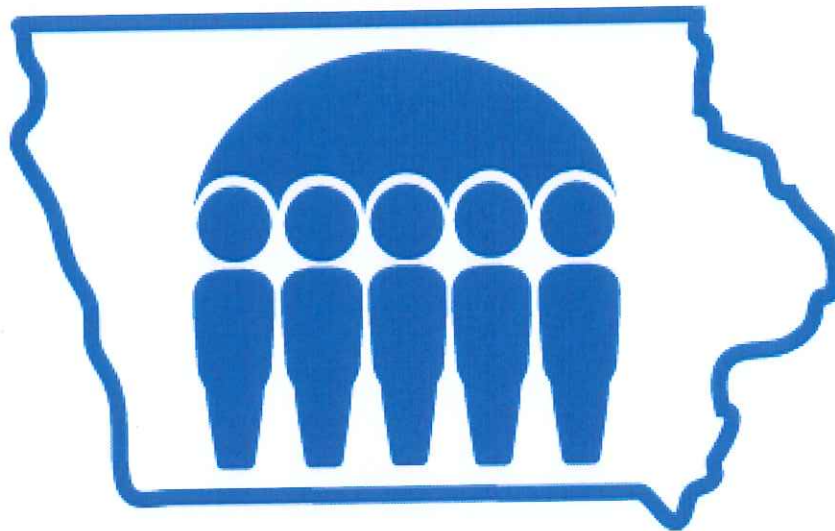
Sincerely,

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 2013

# Autism Support Program Annual Report

## Executive Summary:

The Iowa Legislature created the Autism Support Program in 2013 Iowa Acts, Senate File 446, Sections 82-85. Governor Branstad signed the measure into law on June 20, 2013. The Autism Support Program 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 is in the process of reviewing responses to a request for proposal (RFP) issued for administration of the Autism Support Program. As the program has not begun operations yet, the Department does not have utilization or financial data to submit for the report. The Department has no recommendations for changes to the program at this time. After the program has begun offering services to individuals, and successes and challenges are identified, possible changes or adjustments to the program may be identified.

The Department has also issued rules for the Autism Support Program as required by Senate File 446. The rules are expected to be fully implemented by April 1, 2014 and will provide further guidance in operation of the program. The proposed rules were taken into consideration when writing the RFP so the rules will not change the scope of work or deliverables in the RFP.

## Introduction:

The Iowa Legislature created the Autism Support Program in Senate File 446 (2013), and Governor Branstad signed the measure into law on June 20, 2013. 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 purpose of the program is to provide payment for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) treatment for children up to the age of nine who have a diagnosis of Autism and meet eligibility requirements as described in the legislation. The program also requires access to care coordination through the University of Iowa Regional Autism Assistance Program or through Medicaid-approved Integrated Health Homes for children served by the program.

**Overview of progress:**

In July 2013, the Department consulted with a panel of expert stakeholders in the development of the proposed rules for the Autism Support Program through a face to face meeting and follow-up conference call. The panel also provided comment to the rules after they were noticed. The panel consisted of providers of autism services, legislators, family members, and other stakeholders.

In October 2013, the Department presented the proposed rules to the Mental Health and Disability Services Commission (Commission) which approved the rules. The rules have been noticed and public comment has been received. The Department will present the rules to Commission in January to request approval. Anticipated effective date is April 1, 2014.

In November 2013, the Department issued an RFP for administration of the program, including but not limited to eligibility determination, maintenance of the provider network, utilization management, and financial management. The Department is in the process of evaluation of the RFP bids and expects to name a successful bidder by January 3, 2014.

**Recommendations:**

The Department does not have any recommendations for any changes to the program at this time as program implementation is currently in process.