Autism Alliance of Michigan
AAoM

Leading autism collaboration in Michigan…

House Committee on Families, Children & Seniors
March 2012

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The Numbers

- 1/110
- Includes ENTIRE spectrum!
  - 1-2/1,000: Classic Autism (most symptoms, lowest functioning
  - 6/1,000: Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) (fewer symptoms than CA, mid-high function)
  - 3/1,000: Asperger's (highest functioning-average to above average cognition and language)

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Accurate Diagnosis

- Autism looks like many other disorders and many other disorders look like autism
- Accurate, reliable diagnosis of autism can ONLY be provided by a qualified, experienced professional
- Social workers, speech, occupational, and other therapists are NOT qualified to diagnose autism independently

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Accurate Diagnosis

- The autism insurance mandate clearly indicates who can diagnose autism
- Autism is defined by specific criteria, outlined in DSM – IV
- **STEP 1 in Management: Accurate diagnosis**

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- Misdiagnosis = Mistreatment = Lost Time, Dollars, and Opportunity

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- Prevalence Rates ≠ Treatment Rates
- Intervention Intensity is HIGHLY dependent on functioning level and logistics of implementation
  - Access/availability of services
  - Caregiver ability to comply
  - Cost

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- 20% of the ASD population fall into the classic autism category (lowest functioning)
- <20% of the 1/110 will need the maximum intensity, at the highest cost range of the benefit ($35K – 50K)

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- 80% of the 1/110 will fall in a mid-high functioning range
- We DO NOT want mid-high functioning children in secluded, highly structured clinical settings (or at least not for very long)
- Very young: get them in, get them out
- The social benefits from integrated settings prove more effective towards progress than highly structured clinical settings, one-on-one with a therapist

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- The Data Speaks… (Wyman, 2011)
  - In early years (2-6) cost range $20K and drop to $5K thereafter
  - Use of ABA drops quickly:
    - <6 years (65%)
    - By 8 (22%)
    - By 13-14 (3-4%) – ASSUMING EARLY INTERVENTION

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- **STEP 2 in Management:**
  - Assigning appropriate intensity/program type to individual functioning level and in consideration of many other familial, demographic, accessibility factors

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- **STEP 3 in Management**
  - Only licensed psychologists with extensive ABA experience or board certified behavior analysts can provide or supervise ABA therapies
  - Licensing/certification requirements are rigorous and limit who is qualified to provide this therapy

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- Want Data?
  - ABA is a data driven therapy
  - Regular graphing/charting determine treatment intensity, type, goals/objectives
  - Ongoing adjustment to therapy assures progress can be made

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- **STEP 4 in Management:**
  - Accountability
    - Easy to do

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- Contrary to popular belief….this is a manageable disorder, in terms of care and cost

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- For all these reasons, the predicted cost of providing ABA therapy to children with ASD has not been incurred in states that have passed the mandate!

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Intervention Programming

- School Issues
  - Schools do not diagnose autism, children become ELIGIBLE for autism related services
  - Schools are not equipped to provide clinical therapies

A Complex, but Manageable Disorder: Why NOT Schools

- Therapies provided in schools are specific to improving ACADEMIC outcomes
- Clinical therapies address function and skill in day to day environments outside the school; home, community
- One does NOT NECESSARILY transfer to the other!!

ASD: Dispelling Myths…

- Autism is the new ADHD; everyone has it
- Schools diagnose autism
- 1/110 children with ASD need $50,000 worth of therapy
- ABA is ONE program
- Schools can effectively provide clinical therapies
- Anyone can deliver ABA

A Complex, but Mismanaged Disorder?

- Limited/No Early Intervention =
  - Poor outcomes, quality of life
  - Additional cost in:
    - Chronic behavioral problems
    - Family stress, divorce, dysfunction
    - Co-morbidity (65% of adults with ASD have anxiety/depression)
    - Pharmacological dependence
    - Increasing psychiatric care over lifetime
    - Safety/Risk issues

A Complex, but Mismanaged Disorder?

- WHO COVERS THESE COSTS????
  - Insurers
  - Tax payers