MHA
MICHIGAN HEALTH & HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
Advocating for hospitals and the patients they serve

TO: Members of the House Families, Children & Seniors Committee

FROM: Chris Mitchell, Director, Government Relations

DATE: March 22, 2012

SUBJECT: Senate Bills 414-415 Health Insurance Coverage for Autism Treatment
MHA Position: **SUPPORT**

The Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) supports Senate Bills 414-415 sponsored by Senator Mike Green and Senator Tupac Hunter, respectively. These bills would require health insurers and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for autism spectrum disorders. Historically, the MHA has opposed mandated insurance benefits of any kind, because of the potential increase in health care costs. **In extraordinary circumstances, the MHA has moved from this long-standing position and believes to objective of SBs 414-415, in combination with an ongoing adequate allocation of state funding, will improve the health and wellness of many children throughout Michigan.** In addition, the MHA contends that failure to treat autism can lead to increased costs in related physical health complications

The number of children diagnosed with autism is growing exponentially every year. Statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identify around 1 in 110 children in the United States are on the autism disorder spectrum, a 600 percent increase in the prevalence over the past two decades. Autism Spectrum Disorder affects an estimated 3 million individuals in the United States.

As a result of the growing numbers of instances of autism, efforts to reform health insurance coverage for treatment at the state level has increased over the past four years. In 2008, only seven states had mandated insurance coverage for autism. With your support, Michigan would now join twenty-nine other states that have adopted some form of mandatory autism health insurance coverage.

The MHA strongly believes that evidenced-based autism treatment should be covered in all health care benefit plans. **The MHA supports a state-level mandate for evidence-based autism treatment coverage in combination with an ongoing adequate allocation of state General Funds to support the benefit expansion in employer, individual and Medicaid coverage. Today, we urge you to support Senate Bills 414-415.**

Please contact Chris Mitchell (cmitchell@mha.org) at (517) 703-8601 at the MHA if you have further questions on this issue.

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