

FY 2012 Report to Legislature Autism Treatment Account

Overview

The Autism Treatment Account (ATA):

- Established in March 2010 by the Utah Legislature with the passage of House Bill 311.
- Revised during the 2012 legislative session.
 - o HB 272 created a pilot program to provide services for children ages 2 to 6 years through three mechanisms;
 - 1) a Medicaid Waiver,
 - 2) PEHP insured, eligible children, and
 - 3) the Autism Treatment Account.
- A restricted special revenue account for the receipt and expenditure of funds to be used for assistance in funding services and therapy to eligible Utah children less than 6 years of age with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- The account may also accept “gifts, grants, donations, and bequests of real property, personal property, or services, from any source, or any other conveyance that may be made to the account from private sources, interest and other earnings derived from the account money.”
- Funding was appropriated by the state to the ATA for \$1M for the 2 year pilot program.
- A private donation of \$500,000 from Intermountain Healthcare has been received
- A donation is pending from another organization.
- Administered by the Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health
 - o Staff support from the Bureau of Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN), in the Division of Family Health and Preparedness.

Autism Treatment Account Advisory Committee

The legislation established the Autism Treatment Account Advisory Committee

- Purpose of committee is to recommend how funds should be managed and expended.

The six Governor-appointed members serving on the committee:

- Harper Randall, MD (representing Utah Department of Health),
- Peter Nicholas, PhD (providing expertise in treatment of ASD),
- Paul Carbone, MD (pediatrician specializing in ASD),
- Leeann Whiffen (family member),
- Cheryl Smith (family advocate/president of the Autism Council of Utah), and
- Jeffrey Skibitsky (a board certified behavioral analyst).

Cheryl Smith is the current chair as selected by the ATA Advisory Committee.

Autism Treatment Account: Recent Activities

The ATA Advisory Committee was charged with creating a rule to govern administration of the funds.

This rule includes:

- qualification criteria and procedures for selecting children who may qualify for assistance from the account,
- qualifications, criteria, and procedures for evaluating the services and providers to include in the program, and
- provisions to address and avoid conflicts of interest that may arise in relation to the committee’s work.

- The proposed rule went through the rulemaking process and became effective July 30, 2012.

The Autism Treatment Account Advisory Committee and the Utah Department of Health determined that the most efficient and effective way to provide therapy for children under HB272 was to issue a request for grant application (RFA).

- The purpose of the RFA was to enter into contracts with qualified providers or organizations to provide services eligible under UCA 26-52 (<http://le.utah.gov/UtahCode/section.jsp?code=26-52>).
- Account monies will be used to provide a child who has a diagnosis of ASD, and who is at least two years of age but younger than six years, with services that utilize applied behavior analysis and other proven effective therapies per national standards.
- All services provided will include at least:
 1. Applied behavior analysis therapy provided by or supervised by a board certified behavior analyst or a licensed psychologist with equivalent university training and supervised experience who is working toward board certification in applied behavior analysis;
 2. Willingness to collaborate with existing telehealth networks to reach children in rural and underserved areas of the state; and
 3. Methods to engage family members in the treatment process.

The RFA resulted in contracts with four ASD therapy providers.

- During the open enrollment period for application of eligible children with these providers, 68 applications were received.

Contracts negotiated with the four providers:

- To provide 79 weeks of therapy based on the state appropriation of \$1 million.
- Not less than 15 children have been randomly selected, evaluated, and are in the early phases of therapy planning.
- In addition, a donation was received from Intermountain Healthcare and contracts were amended to provide services to seven additional children.
- A donation from another organization is expected to be forthcoming shortly after the beginning of 2013 and it is anticipated that contracts will then be amended to provide services to three additional children.
- As children age out of treatment (become 6 years of age), as outlined by UCA 26-52, additional children from the pool of applications will be considered for enrollment for therapy.
- During open enrollment, one provider identified four children who qualified for ABA therapy services covered by their insurance carrier.

The ATA Program is administered at less than the allowable administrative costs of 9% as outlined in HB272.

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