**SAMPLE LETTER**

January XX, 2019

Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services

Office of Legal & Regulatory Affairs

Attention: Margaret Rose

P.O. Box 712, Mail Code #26

Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0712

Re: EPSDT Autism Benefit

Dear Ms. Rose,

I enthusiastically commend Governor Murphy’s commitment to children with autism as evidenced by the first-time inclusion of $25 million in state and federal dollars in the State FY 19 budget for the medically necessary treatment of autism under the Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit. This investment will tangibly improve children’s and families’ lives and decrease the devastating personal and societal costs of autism for the 1 in 34 children affected by autism in New Jersey - 20,000 of whom are Medicaid beneficiaries.

**FOR PARENTS:**

Write something about your child and how treatment would or has helped.

**FOR PROFESSIONALS:**

Write something about your professional role and the impact that treatment or lack thereof has had on the children and adults with whom you have worked.

Consistent with Autism New Jersey’s recommendations, I urge you to consider the following:

1. **Evidence-based Treatment**

AGREEMENT: We firmly believe that children with autism deserve access to the best available treatments that have been tested through research and have the consensus of the scientific community. Decades of well-controlled research and parents across the state have repeatedly demonstrated that the abilities and quality of life of children with autism improve with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and related services. The inclusion of ABA is a wise investment that will change children’s lives and lower the long-term costs for families and the state.

CONCERN: Children’s lives should not be gambled with nor should medically necessary treatment be delayed in favor of interventions that have not been proven effective by medical treatment standards. Without effective treatment, the symptoms of autism can worsen over time and cause greater harm.

1. **Provider Qualifications**

AGREEMENT: Autism New Jersey agrees with many of the provider qualifications included in the proposed plan and recommends that all medically necessary treatment is provided by professionals who are licensed in the State of New Jersey or certified by a nationally accredited credentialing body.

CONCERN: We are concerned with the wide variety of professionals who could provide “Behavior Support Services.” Many of these professionals do not have “Behavior Support Services” or, as it is more formally known, “Applied Behavior Analysis,” in their scope of practice and are not qualified or competent to deliver such services. This decreases the likelihood that these services will ameliorate the symptoms of autism.

1. **Process to Access Treatment**

COMMENT: Given the urgent and tremendous unmet treatment needs of children with autism across the state, I recommend that the administrative home for these services be able to facilitate timely and streamlined access to screening, assessment, treatment, and reimbursement with no improper limitations or delays such as age limits, Children’s System of Care (CSOC) developmental disability eligibility, CSOC Care Management Organization (CMO) eligibility, acute behavioral challenges, limitations in provider choice, etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

Name

Title

Affiliation