

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009

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SENATE BILL 944

Short Title: Study/Autism Spectrum Disorders. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Garrou.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 26, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMISSION ON HEALTH
INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF AUTISM
SPECTRUM DISORDERS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) Establishment and Purpose. – There is established the Legislative Study Commission on Insurance Coverage for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders (Commission). The purpose of the Commission is to study and assess the need for and the merits of providing health insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders. In conducting the study, the Commission shall consider the following:

- (1) Autism is the second most common developmental disability, occurring in up to one of every 150 children born.
- (2) More than 50,000 North Carolina families are affected by autism spectrum disorders.
- (3) Research shows that evidence-based autism treatments provide the best outcomes both for the individual with autism and for reducing long-term economic costs.
- (4) Currently, most health benefit plans specifically exclude coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

SECTION 1.(b) Membership. – The Commission shall consist of 17 members, as follows:

- (1) Six members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, four of whom shall be members of the Senate and two of whom shall be public members, as follows:
 - a. A representative from an institution of higher education with expertise in the area of autism.
 - b. A behavioral analyst who is certified by the behavioral analyst certification board with a specialization in the area of autism.
- (2) Six members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, four of whom shall be members of the House of Representatives and two of whom shall be public members, as follows:
 - a. A developmental pediatrician.
 - b. A speech language pathologist or an occupational therapist with expertise in the area of autism.
- (3) The Commissioner of Insurance or the Commissioner's designee.



- 1 (4) One representative of an insurer, as that term is defined in G.S. 58-3-167,
2 appointed by the Commissioner of Insurance.
3 (5) Three appointed by the Governor, as follows:
4 a. One parent representative from the Autism Society of North
5 Carolina.
6 b. One representative from Autism Speaks, an autism advocacy
7 organization.
8 c. A clinical psychologist with expertise in the area of autism.

9 **SECTION 1.(c) Cochairs.** – The President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the
10 Speaker of the House of Representatives shall each designate one member of the General
11 Assembly as Commission cochair. Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled by the same
12 appointing authority that made the initial appointment. A quorum of the Commission shall be a
13 majority of its members.

14 **SECTION 1.(d) Authority.** – The Commission, while in the discharge of its duties,
15 may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19, 19.1, and 19.4. The Commission may
16 meet at the joint call of the cochairs. The Commission may meet in the legislative building or
17 the legislative office building and may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services
18 as provided under G.S. 120-32.02.

19 **SECTION 1.(e) Reports.** – The Commission shall report its findings and
20 recommendations to the 2010 Regular Session of the 2009 General Assembly upon its
21 convening.

22 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.