

Date: April 4, 2013  
To: The Senate Health Committee  
Subject: Please Support SB365

Dear Members of the Senate Committee On Health Care and Human Services,

Please support SB365, the Autism Health Insurance Reform bill introduced by Sen. Bates. This bill would require health benefit plans – including private plans, as well as PEBB, OEBC, and the Oregon Health Plan – to pay for medically necessary, evidence-based treatment for patients with autism. It would also enable licensing of providers of applied behavior analysis therapy through the Oregon Health Licensing Agency, to ensure that patients receive quality, effective treatment from capable providers.

Every year, 600 more children are diagnosed with autism in Oregon. With effective, timely treatment, many of these children will be able to make substantial gains and need fewer services. Providing these individuals with the right care at the right time will save the state money.

At the age of two, my daughter Piper was diagnosed with Autism. For two and a half years, Piper received Speech and Occupational therapy covered by her insurance. However, her progress was painfully slow and she was falling further behind her peers. In September of 2012, we, with the urging of our physician, decided to try ABA. Almost immediately, anyone who was familiar with Piper recognized a difference. Her eye contact and speech improved tremendously. She understood far more than anyone realized.

We are paying \$1500.00 per month out of pocket for her therapy. Ideally, Piper should be getting more hours of therapy but we can't afford more. We have exhausted our savings and my husband is working as much over-time as possible. We are fortunate, that we can pay for a few hours. Many families do not have this option and their children receive nothing. It is imperative for Piper and all children with Autism, that insurance companies start paying for ABA. The benefits will far outweigh the costs. With continued ABA therapy, for the first time, we have hope that Piper can have a full, productive life. She may not need Medicaid services for the rest of her life. Piper, and every child with Autism, deserves the chance to have the best, most independent life possible.

Thank you,

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