



**Arizona  
Department of  
Health Services**

*Office of the Director*

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JANET NAPOLITANO, GOVERNOR  
SUSAN GERARD, DIRECTOR

March 2, 2007

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The Honorable Governor Janet Napolitano  
Office of the Governor  
1700 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Napolitano:

Pursuant to Laws 2006, Chapter 331, Sec. 24, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) is submitting its FY 2007 Legislative Report on Autism Treatment. The Legislature of the State of Arizona appropriated \$2.3M from the medically needy account of the tobacco tax and health care fund in fiscal year 2006-2007 to the Arizona Department of Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health Services (ADHS/DBHS) for services to children through five years of age who have or may be at risk of an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The appropriation in Section 36-774, Arizona Revised Statutes provided stipulations for two separate contracts for delivery of the required services. This report details the progress made to date for implementing the requirements of this statute.

**Section 36-3415, paragraph 2, Arizona Revised Statutes:** This Section appropriated \$500,000 to provide intensive early intervention and therapy services to toddlers who are diagnosed with or are considered at risk of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Section further specified that the eligible provider will be an Autism and Research firm that is based in this state and has raised at least fifteen million dollars of private sector monies. ADHS/DBHS contracted with Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC), an organization which fulfilled the eligibility requirements.

SARRC received a fully executed copy of the contract on January 24, 2007. On February 15, 2007, per contract requirements, SARRC submitted to ADHS/DBHS the following deliverables: program budget, implementation and curriculum plans, process for evaluation and assessment, status of enrollment and the selection/referral process, staff biographical sketches and job descriptions. Upon receipt of these report deliverables, ADHS/DBHS released the initial disbursement of grant funds to SARRC.

The grant will cover 40% of total program costs for the SARRC Community School through June 2008, and represents 7% of SARRC's budgeted revenue for calendar year 2007. As a result of this one-time grant funding, SARRC will provide the following:

- Therapeutic early intervention, school-based services to approximately 24-30 children;
- Statewide training to over 550 toddler and/or preschool providers who will subsequently impact an estimated 2,750 children in a variety of school and preschool settings and
- Parent education to 24-60 parents.

In summary, SARRC estimates that approximately 3,400 children, family members and providers will receive direct services and/or training and technical support as a result of the services provided under this grant.

**Status of School-Based Service Implementation:** The SARRC Community School has two components. The first is a Preschool classroom for children age 3-5 years. This program began in November 2005 with private funding and currently serves nine children with Autism and four typical peers.<sup>1</sup> The second component, developed with funds made available through HB 2371, is the Toddler classroom, which will serve children age 18 months-3 years. SARRC completed classroom renovations on February 9, 2007 and supplies were ordered with expected delivery set for late March, at which time ADHS Licensing will make their final inspection and the classroom will open to students. To date, SARRC has identified six to eight families interested in the Toddler classroom with an additional four typical peers. In order to recruit additional families to reach full capacity in both classrooms (at least 24 children with Autism) SARRC is marketing these school-based services through their website, community publications and events, parent newsletter, conference brochures and outreach to local nonprofits, government programs and Valley schools and districts.

Referrals for the Community School from the Maricopa County Regional Behavioral Health Authority, AHCCCS physicians and the community will be made directly to SARRC who will manage and maintain the wait list on a first-come, first-serve basis. Students will participate in a screening process to ensure that children admitted to the Community School meet the diagnostic criteria and minimum developmental age guidelines. Multiple assessment tools will be administered at entrance and exit of the program to evaluate each child's skill level with ongoing tools used to track progress. It is highly recommended that children entering the program participate for a minimum of six months or one semester session to support the effective outcome of treatment goals.

The SARRC Community School is a 20 hour per week program with curriculum that targets development of the following skill areas: language and communication, motor, play and self-help skills, social interaction, school readiness and treatment of challenging behaviors. The program is designed with wraparound services which include individual speech and music therapies, group music therapy and 1:1 habilitation with the additional availability of occupational therapy and 1:1 home-based habilitation if needed. Interventions based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis are utilized in program activities with a low teacher to child ratio (1:3).

Currently, SARRC has eight employees who will be involved in varying degrees with the Community School as part of their regular work duties. In addition to these staff, SARRC is actively recruiting to hire one Certified Special Education Teacher, four Community School Teachers and One Habilitator.

**Status of Provider Training:** Increasing the capacity of Arizona's Toddler and Preschool Providers to work effectively with children with Autism is the second component of services provided under this grant. SARRC plans to offer monthly three-hour workshops for the duration of the ADHS/DBHS contract. A training at the Isaac School District is scheduled for February 23, 2007 with 45 registered attendees. The March, April and May 2007 trainings are currently booked with 55 attendees for each workshop with some registrants from Prescott. SARRC is working with partners in the Tucson and Flagstaff areas to bring provider training to various rural areas in the state. Training attendance will be tracked and future reports will show the impact on rural providers' education.

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<sup>1</sup> Inclusion of typical peers is a core program component according to accepted best practices for children with Autism. Expenses related to the typical children will be covered with private funding sources, not as part of the ADHS grant.

**Status of Parent Education:** In conjunction with the Community School program, parents will be provided with a schedule for SARRC's JumpStart™ and More Than Words™ programs. JumpStart is an educational training and parent empowerment program for families with children up to age five who are newly diagnosed with an ASD while the More Than Words program teaches parents how to be their child's primary language facilitator. Under the grant, parents of the Community School children may audit courses of interest from either or both programs according to their child's particular needs.

**Evaluation of Autism Services:** Per contract requirements, SARRC will submit quarterly reports to ADHS/DBHS on the following elements:

- Admission and discharge dates for all children served through the program,
- Cost of service per child in the program,
- Number of children served by ethnicity and the length of time each child received services,
- Results of the individual child's testing on tools for initial and ongoing outcome measures,
- Parent interview at time of intake and at quarterly intervals to measure parent's perception of child's progress specific to program services,
- Track and report children's eligibility for DDD/ALTCS and AHCCCS/behavioral health eligibility,
- Track and report where families reside, to determine the number of children served in semi-rural/urban areas,
- Outcome data,
- Barriers encountered and
- Other elements as identified in conjunction with ADHS/DBHS.

Upon completion of one session (six months) of the Community School program ADHS/DBHS will review the data and evaluate the efficacy and cost effectiveness of the services provided under this grant.

**Section 36-3415, paragraph 1, Arizona Revised Statutes:** This Section appropriated \$1.8M to provide Autism services that utilize techniques of discrete trial and natural environment intensive behavioral treatment through Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to children through five years of age who are diagnosed with or are considered at risk of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The Section further specified that the eligible provider will be an established firm that specializes in Autism services and related disorders and employs at least five nationally board certified behavior analysts, one of whom is a state-licensed psychologist. ADHS/DBHS is contracting with the Center for Autism and Related Disorders, Inc. (CARD), an organization headquartered in Tarzana, California who fulfilled the eligibility requirements.

**Status of Program Implementation:** Since late October 2006, ADHS/DBHS has been working with Doreen Granpeesheh, Ph.D., Clinical Director at CARD, on the details of the contract and establishing an office in Arizona. On January 9, 2007 representatives from ADHS/DBHS met with Dr. Granpeesheh to discuss the elements of the grant funding and proposed structure for the Arizona program. On February 7, 2007, Dr. Granpeesheh submitted a Letter of Intent to the Health Program Manager at ADHS/Office of Behavioral Health Licensure to open a treatment clinic that provides behavioral treatment based on ABA methods for children diagnosed with an ASD. CARD reported their intention to begin providing services in Phoenix in March 2007 and to date have secured a physical location, hired staff and initiated review of applications from potential clients.

Grant funding will be disbursed on a quarterly basis through June 2008. The initial disbursement will occur upon receipt of the report outlining the Program Plan with an acceptable budget.

**Program Overview:** The purpose of the CARD Arizona model will be to provide a complete educational program based on the principles of ABA for young children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder that is based on initial assessments of the child's skills and deficits. Early intensive behavioral treatment (IBT) emphasizes the application of learning principles such as operant conditioning in teaching children new skills. This pilot program will be conducted as an empirical evaluation of the effects of these services with publication of the results to include acknowledgement of the support provided by the State of Arizona and the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Each child will receive a customized and comprehensive ABA treatment program around specific strengths and needs with individualized goals that teach skills at a pace that is socially and intellectually challenging in all skill domains (language, social, adaptive and academic). Symptoms that will be addressed include impaired social interaction, language and communication delays, and restrictive, repetitive and stereotypic behavior patterns. Learning objectives will be tailored to each child's developmental level with treatment interventions targeting skill areas and behaviors as follows:

- Language and communication skills
- Motor, Play and Self-help skills
- Social interaction
- Theory of Mind
- Executive Functioning
- School skills
- Treatment of challenging behaviors

Consecutive referrals to CARD will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- age below 60 months at time of intake
- diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- no additional IBT intervention is currently being utilized from a service provider using the methods of ABA as determined by caregiver report and record review

Each participant in the program will be clinically assessed using diagnostic indices and standardized assessment instruments prior to intervention and post treatment. Recommendations for services are based on the age and functioning of the child, as determined by the results of these evaluation tools. Caregiver interview and home observation activities are also completed prior to treatment delivery.

Children will receive intensive treatment for 20-40 hours per week with one-to-one services initially administered in the home setting and then generalized to other settings. Two to four hours of supervisory consultation will occur twice a month in which the treatment team discusses the current plan, concerns, and behavioral and educational interventions.

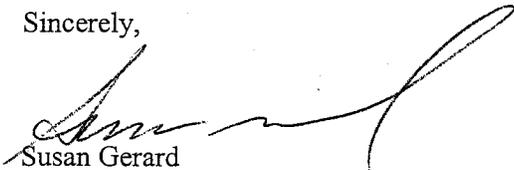
Other program measures that will be utilized include the following:

- a quarterly parent treatment satisfaction tool
- one hour of videotaped child therapy per month to measure treatment integrity and reliability
- pre-treatment comparisons addressing statistical equality prior to intervention
- post-treatment data indicating statistically significant differences post intervention

**Evaluation of Autism Services:** Upon completion of the grant, ADHS/DBHS will receive a final program report from CARD that evaluates the efficacy and cost effectiveness of the treatment services provided. Additionally, a final expenditure report will be submitted by August 15, 2008 which will include the return of any unspent funds as of June 30, 2008.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this report, please feel free to contact Christina Dye, Division Chief, Clinical and Recovery Services, Behavioral Health Services at 364-4604.

Sincerely,



Susan Gerard  
Director

SG/tsg

Enclosure

c: Dennis Burke, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office  
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