

## Addressing Autism

Tuesday, April 17, 2012 Tags: [Other](#)



### Addressing Autism

The Christie Administration Is Committed To Providing Critical Programs And Services To Individuals With Autism And Their Families

*"As government leaders, we have a moral obligation to recognize the individual and unique needs of every New Jerseyan with a developmental disability ... With this year's 2013 budget, my Administration is reaffirming its commitment to help residents with autism and their families with the tools they need to lead fuller, more productive lives."*

— Governor Chris Christie, Statement On National Autism Awareness Month, April 11, 2012

### NEW JERSEY HAS ONE OF THE BEST SYSTEMS IN THE NATION FOR IDENTIFYING, DIAGNOSING AND CARING FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

New Jersey is a national leader in early intervention and education of children with autism which impacts about 1 in 50 children across the Garden State and their families. Governor Christie and his Administration remain firmly committed to finding new and innovative ways to help New Jersey families impacted by ASD and improving the lives of their loved ones.

New Jersey will soon have a center to coordinate academic and private research being done across the state on the cause of ASDs. The Governor's Council for Research and Treatment of Autism is set to establish the NJ Autism Center of Excellence this summer, consisting of a Coordinating Center and up to three program sites that will develop and conduct clinical research projects.

In addition, \$8 million in grants will fund the latest research projects that have the potential to improve the physical and/or behavioral health and well-being of individuals with ASDs.

#### RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Governor Christie is committed to a fundamental rethinking of how individuals with developmental disabilities receive services. The Governor has long spoken of the state's moral imperative to recognize the individuality and unique needs of every New Jerseyan with a developmental disability.

#### Focusing Services On Families, Not Departments:

The creation of the Division of Child Integrated System of Care Services within the Department of Children and Families will finally address the holistic needs and concerns of families with children with developmental disabilities and other complex needs in one place. The reorganization is designed to ensure that families of people with developmental disabilities have access to every possible support that State government provides.

The new division will become the departmental "home" for children with multiple needs, bringing together programs now scattered throughout State government. This will allow for a more family-centric approach.

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Underlying this change is the view that children with developmental disabilities and their families should not be “carved out” of generic supports and/or the systems of care that serve other children and families in New Jersey. Services should be integrated, provided as part of a continuum, and responsive to the whole child and the whole family.

#### **Ensuring Coordinated Services Through Transitions:**

The Department of Human Services and DCF will work together to ensure that the transition to this new integrated system will occur smoothly, as children with developmental disabilities who enter the system, regardless of their needs, are referred to DCF for services.

At age 16, the Division of Developmental Disabilities will assess each child and begin to provide transitional planning services. All direct services will continue to be provided by DCF until age 21.

Thus, a child will be dually served by both systems between the ages of 16-21, ensuring the opportunity for meaningful and coordinated transition planning so that children and their families can make a seamless transition into adult services. All services after 21 will be provided by DDD.

#### **THE CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO HELPING NEW JERSEYANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES LEAD RICHER LIVES**

Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2013 budget reflects a commitment to provide critical programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities or mental illness and their families:

**Increasing Funding for Placement Services** Governor Christie's fiscal year 2013 budget provides **\$24.7 million** of new funding to develop additional community placements and services, allowing for 130 people to move off of the Community Services Waiting List, and individuals and families to receive necessary residential and day services.

An additional **\$4.6 million** is provided to pay for the 600 placements that occurred during fiscal 2012,

A total of **\$9.7 million** will support the Department of Human Services' *Olmstead* initiatives and transition individuals from the seven developmental centers into the community. In addition to funding the 125 placements created during fiscal year 2012, an additional 175 consumers will transition from the institutions to community residential settings.

**Identifying Children with Autism.** More than 6,000 children with autism have been registered and it is expected that approximately 1,200 children will be registered each year. Once registered, families are referred to a county case manager who works with the family and helps them to access available services.

*In Fiscal Year 2013, \$500,000 is protected for the Autism Registry, which makes it easier for families to be connected to the appropriate diagnostic treatment and support services in their community.*

**Making Autism Outreach a Priority.** In August 2010, the Christie Administration established the Office on Autism within the Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities, creating a centralized location to coordinate autism-related information. The Office has organized an Interdepartmental Work Group to enhance coordination among agencies charged with providing services to persons with autism spectrum disorders.

**Funding Early Childhood Intervention.** The Christie Administration will continue to provide support to families with children with developmental delays and disabilities from birth to age three. The Early Intervention Program services include developmental intervention, speech, physical and occupational therapy and other services necessary to achieve their full potential. \$88.4 million is budgeted in Fiscal Year 2013 for the program.

**Providing Transition Services for Adults.** The Christie Administration has dedicated funding for young adults with developmental disabilities who age out of the Department of Education's special education entitlement by ensuring a seamless transition to the Department of Human Services' adult day-programming.

**Protecting the Dignity of Those with Developmental Disabilities.** In 2010, Governor Christie signed into law the “Central Registry of Offenders Against Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.” It requires DHS to maintain a central registry - a confidential list of caregivers working in these programs who have been determined to have abused, neglected, or exploited an individual with a developmental disability.

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