



AN ACT TO ENHANCE STANDARDS OF CARE FOR THOSE WITH AUTISM AND INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

H.242 / S.149 , filed by Rep. Garballey, Rep. Barber, and Sen. Lewis

This bill would develop training opportunities for medical providers to improve their ability to diagnosis, treat, and care for patients with IDD and autism.

CONTEXT

- People with IDD experience poorer health outcomes, lower life expectancy, and higher mortality rates than the general population. Outcomes are even worse for those with intersecting marginalized identities, including Black and brown individuals. This is often due to structural barriers in receiving appropriate treatment and quality care.
- According to the [Autism Research Institute](#), 78% of children with autism have at least one co-occurring mental health condition, such as depression and anxiety.
- Many medical providers have not received adequate education in treating and caring for patients with IDD. A [2021 Harvard study](#) found that only 41% of providers felt confident that they could provide high-quality care to people with disabilities.

THE BILL

Establishes an advisory committee to develop statewide standards regarding diagnosis, treatment, and care of patients with IDD and autism. The committee will focus on intersecting identities and will include representation from patient advocates, family members, state officials, and other stakeholders. The bill also requires that the Executive Office of Health and Human Services create a state plan that must include:

- Continuing education requirements for healthcare providers to better understand strategies for working with patients with autism and IDD
- Adopting standards to improve the assessment and diagnosis of autism and IDD during routine outpatient primary care examinations
- Ensuring that continuing education requirements related to autism and IDD are part of state licensure renewals
- Particular focus on emergency department boarding

THE IMPACT

Healthcare is a human right, yet many people with autism and IDD face challenges accessing critical physical and mental healthcare. Providers don't have the tools to appropriately support this population, leading to poor health outcomes. This bill aims to increase awareness about the healthcare and mental health needs of this population and includes concrete steps to help providers grow their skills.

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For More information, contact Nora Bent, Director of Government Affairs & Strategic Partnerships: nbent@arcmass.org

