

# Autism Spectrum Disorder Task Force 2021 Annual Report Autism Spectrum Disorder State Plan

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## **Overview**

Pursuant to North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) 50-06-32, the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force provides an annual report to the governor and the Legislative Council regarding the status of the ASD State Plan.

## **Autism Spectrum Disorder Task Force Members and Duties**

Senate Bill No. 2174 (2009), codified as Section 50-06-32, established an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Task Force consisting of the State Health Officer or designee, the executive director of the Department of Human Services or designee, the director of special education, the executive director of the Protection and Advocacy Project or designee, and the following members appointed by the Governor:

- A pediatrician with expertise in the area of autism spectrum disorder;
- A psychologist with expertise in the area of autism spectrum disorder;
- A college of education faculty member with expertise in the area of autism spectrum disorder;
- A behavioral specialist;
- A licensed teacher with expertise in the area of autism spectrum disorder;
- An occupational therapist;
- A representative of a health insurance company doing business in this state;
- A representative of a licensed residential care facility that provides care and services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder;
- A representative who is an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian tribe;
- An adult self advocate with autism spectrum disorder;
- A parent of a child with autism spectrum disorder;
- A family member of an adult with autism spectrum disorder; and
- A member of the legislative assembly.

The Task Force had four new appointments in 2021 due to members leaving their positions or resigning. The appointments filled during the 2021 year were: an enrolled member of a federally recognized Indian Tribe, Department of Public Instruction Special Education Designee, Protection and Advocacy Project Executive Director and family member of an adult with autism.

The Task Force examines the following topics during its quarterly meetings:

- early intervention services;
- family support services that would enable an individual with ASD to remain in the least restrictive home-based or community setting;
- programs transitioning an individual with ASD from a school-based setting to adult day programs and workforce development programs;
- the cost of providing services; and
- the nature and extent of federal resources that can be directed to the provision of services for individuals with ASD.

During 2021, the Task Force held meetings in February, May, August, and November with a special meeting in March to discuss ASD Voucher program changes.

## **ASD State Plan Updates**

The State Plan goals and the progress during 2021 is summarized below.

### Education/Training

- Held the 2021 Virtual ND Autism Conference in April 2021. Plans are being made for another conference in 2022.

### Communication/Public Awareness

- Reviewed and updated the ASD Resource Booklet that is available to the public at [https://www.health.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Files/HSC/SHS/Booklets/Autism\\_Resource\\_Book.pdf](https://www.health.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/Files/HSC/SHS/Booklets/Autism_Resource_Book.pdf). The updates will be published in January 2022.

The end of 2021 brought changes of membership within the Task Force resulting in a reorganization of members to work groups and discussion regarding updating the State Plan to reflect changes in ASD services and needs throughout the state. This may result in changes to the State Plan in the coming year.