

SS SCS SB 768 -- AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

This bill specifies that "autism spectrum disorder" includes autistic disorder, Asperger's syndrome, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder, and Rett's syndrome and establishes the Missouri Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders within the Department of Mental Health to advise and make recommendations regarding all levels of autism spectrum disorder services.

The bill requires the commission to:

- (1) Study and report on the means for developing a comprehensive, coordinated statewide delivery system and ensure that resources are created, well-utilized, and appropriately spread across the state;
- (2) Conduct a needs assessment for coordinated, enhanced, and targeted special education capabilities within each region of the state;
- (3) Develop a recommendation for enlisting appropriate universities and colleges to develop certification or degree programs for students specializing in autism spectrum disorder intervention;
- (4) Make recommendations for developing a comprehensive statewide plan for an integrated system of training, treatment, and services for individuals of all ages with autism spectrum disorders;
- (5) Meet at least four times annually including at least two times before December 31 of the first year the commission is fully established; and
- (6) Report its preliminary findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by July 1, 2009.

The bill establishes the Office of Autism Services in the Division of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities within the Department of Mental Health to provide leadership in program development for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders including program standards and the coordination of program capacity.