

## Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's

## Capitol Report



### *TCAPDD Issues Autism Report for 2013*



As required by Human Resources Code Chapter 114, and rules within the Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services (DADS), the Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders (TCAPDD), Chairman Frank McCamant, has notified lawmakers about the publication of its **2013 Annual Report** which documents the actions of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, the progress of state projects providing services to Texans with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as well as offers a perspective on how the State of Texas can best serve individuals with ASD and other intellectual disabilities who require critical supports to live in their communities.

The report reveals that one out of every 88 children in Texas has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and thousands of adults have yet to be diagnosed. ASD is a challenge that cannot wait to be addressed. Additionally, it reports that an estimated 1.5 million individuals in the U.S. and tens of millions worldwide are affected by autism; government statistics suggest the prevalence rate of autism is increasing 10-17% annually. In Texas, over 155,000 people with disabilities, including ASD, await services from Medicaid waiver programs, over 45,000 of whom have been waiting for 5-12 years. Creating financing strategies to adequately and cost-effectively serve the most vulnerable among us must be a priority for the state's political leaders. A long-range, multi-agency approach to develop, deliver and sustain services across the person's life span is required to respond to the needs of the thousands of Texans with ASD who are already identified and those who will be identified in the future.

The Texas Council is heartened by the passage of SB7 by the 83rd Texas Legislature. We believe it may offer a potential vehicle for improving and expanding services and supports for people with ASD. The bill is designed to improve the coordination of Medicaid funded long-term care and supports with acute care services using managed care concepts and delivery models. Its purpose, over time, is to redesign the service delivery system to more efficiently serve Texans with IDD. SB7 also proposes to provide basic attendant care and habilitation services to 11,000 people with IDD through the Community First Choice program.

#### **The Texas Council on Autism's priorities for the legislative interim are:**

- [1] Identify the population of people with ASD and determine their needs;
- [2] Develop and sustain supports for families through on-going support of the Texas Autism Research and Resource Center (TARRC);
- [3] Identify and promote strategies to provide early ASD identification and intervention;
- [4] Assure appropriate professional development for the next generation of teachers of children with ASD;
- [5] Influence the managed care redesign of long-term care services for people with ASD; and
- [6] Maintain an inventory of ASD services available to Texans with ASD

#### **In its conclusion, the report states:**

The Legislature has given the Texas Council on Autism an important and challenging mission; to identify the needs of Texans with ASD and to make recommendations to state authorities on how those needs might best be addressed. In order to meet that mission, the Council relies heavily on building and sustaining active partnerships with a wide variety of state agencies, university disability programs, service providers and non-profit organizations. Such collaborations enable the Council to maximize both human and financial capital to identify critical ASD needs and to explore proven, cost-effective and evidence-based methods by which these needs may be addressed.

While this Annual Report meets the Council's statutory obligation for 2013, and its work is far from done. The needs of thousands of Texans with ASD and their families are great. The role of public policy makers is daunting. It is the role of the Council to support Texas state authorities as you carry out your responsibilities. Accordingly, the Texas Council on Autism will be prepared to offer expert testimony, technical information, evidence-based research and models of proven program alternatives to inform your decisions. [For a complete copy of the report, visit the link at: [www.texasautismcouncil.org](http://www.texasautismcouncil.org) ]