



JOHN R. KASICH

GOVERNOR • STATE OF OHIO

Communication Department

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DETAILS OF AUTISM BENEFITS FINALIZED FOR STATE OF OHIO EMPLOYEES *Services to Begin Next Fiscal Year*

COLUMBUS – State of Ohio employees and their families with autism will be able to receive treatment as part of their employee health insurance benefits beginning July 1, 2013. The announcement today is a result of Governor John R. Kasich’s pledge late last year to make autism benefits available to State of Ohio employees, and negotiations recently concluded with state employees’ unions to revise the contractually-negotiated employee health plan. Ohio Department of Administrative Services Director Bob Blair, in cooperation with Joint Health Care Committee (JHCC) Co-chairs Kelly L. Phillips and Michael J. D’Arcy, solidified the language used in the contract earlier this week.

“For families that have autism in their lives, it can be a tough path. If they can get help, it’s expensive, and that cost puts additional strains on relationships and family life. We can do better and I’m proud that we are doing better with this agreement to provide access to this important care,” said Blair.

“The JHCC is taking proactive steps to meet the needs of Ohio children affected by autism,” said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe. “This is another example of how State of Ohio labor and management representatives are working together and taking positive steps to impact the health outcomes for State of Ohio employees and their families.”

Research shows that early intervention helps make a significant and lifelong difference in the lives of children with autism by improving social, cognitive and communication skills, and by helping families alleviate financial burdens while developing the unique skills they need to raise their children. For this reason, Governor Kasich, Director Blair and union representatives have worked hard to reach an agreement that efficiently provides for Ohio’s families managing the effects of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Beginning at the start of the next fiscal year, state employees and their dependents will receive access to quality healthcare for ASD including physical, speech and occupational therapy, clinical therapeutic intervention, and mental and behavioral health outpatient services.

Autism services are being defined as part of the “essential health benefit” package offered through the state employees’ health plan, some private health insurance and health insurance sold through the upcoming federally managed health insurance exchange.

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