



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

**Fast Facts:**  
2013 Legislative Session

## **Reform 2020: Intensive services for children with autism spectrum disorder**

The 2014-15 state budget invests \$12.7 million to create a new Medical Assistance (MA) benefit for children with autism spectrum disorder. While MA has provided supports for children with autism in the past, it has not offered a comprehensive set of benefits with early intervention services believed to be critical for children with autism spectrum disorder.

The new law:

- Creates a benefit set for children from birth to 18 who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The benefit set includes high-quality, medically necessary, intensive, early intervention, and related services that are based in developmental and behavioral science. Covered services will be designed to improve a child's communications skills and capacity for social interaction and to reduce maladaptive behaviors at a critical time in the child's development.
- Recognizes that solid evidence is lacking as to which services should be provided to which individuals, at what intensity and for how long. Therefore, the benefit includes a process for learning while doing, building on evidence that currently exists and closely monitoring results.
- Requires a comprehensive multidisciplinary diagnostic evaluation of autism spectrum disorder services to determine the most effective treatment plan that can be provided within the context of the child's family, culture and community.
- Coordinates the MA benefit with education, medical, therapeutic and other services.

### **Next steps**

The federal government must approve the new benefit as part of Minnesota's MA package. The Department of Human Services, in consultation with stakeholders and recommendations from key medical and education advisers, will further define the services available in the new benefit. Implementation details will be open to a 30-day public comment period before submission to the federal government for approval.

### **Number of people affected**

Due to the growing numbers of individuals affected by autism spectrum disorder, there is no cap on the new benefit in terms of numbers of individuals served. However, approximately 440 children are expected to be eligible for this new benefit set in fiscal year 2014. This number is projected to increase to 880 children per fiscal year beginning in fiscal year 2015.

### **Related information**

- Omnibus Health and Human Services bill: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?id=108&doctype=Chapter&type=0&year=2013>
- DHS fact sheet page: <http://mn.gov/dhs/media/fact-sheets/>
- Autism pages on DHS website: <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/autism>

*DHS Communications: June 2013*