

Thank you for considering this bill for recommendation. It has been my goal since 2006 to get legislation like this introduced. When Noah was diagnosed we were overwhelmed, we did not know where to turn as we had no insurance coverage for the services Noah needed. As the cascades of information rushed from doctors, psychologists, social workers, case managers, therapists and lawyers we could not see the future for Noah. We considered many options including moving or signing over parental rights to relatives with Autism coverage

We decided to look at the big picture and saw families just like us struggling the same way. The more I fought the more I see North Dakota has fallen behind in treating Autism effectively. I met more families that had missed windows of opportunity for Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention for their children.

Things need to change in North Dakota. We are only one of five states that has not considered a bill for Autism Spectrum Disorder Treatment. I hope that this is the year it will change.

According to a Harvard Study done in 2006, the lifetime costs associated with raising a child with Autism is "3.2 million per person this consists of medical costs, such as doctors visits,

medications and therapies, it consists of non-medical costs such as adult care, childcare, special education and it also consists of lost income both parental lost income and the lost income of people with autism"

People with severe cases of Autism may never buy a home, own a car or pay taxes. The emotional role of raising a child with Autism is even more draining on a family. Often the child with Autism requires and receives more attention than other children in the household. This can cause animosity among siblings and additional problems for parents.

In 2008, there were 8939 children born in North Dakota. With 1 in 110 being diagnosed with Autism, 81 will be diagnosed with Autism. If we use those numbers, the cost of raising those 81 children will cost North Dakota taxpayers 260-Million dollars. If this rate holds true for this year, while you are in session 26 children will be diagnosed in North Dakota.

We need this bill to be recommended for the future of these children. We need to bring the opportunity for Autism Treatment to North Dakota.

Thank you for your time.