

Evaluation of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Autism CARES Act Initiative

Client: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration

Overview

This 3-year, mixed-methods study evaluated efforts of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide research, screening, and education related to autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities (ASD/DDs). In 2014, Congress passed the Autism CARES (Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support) Act, continuing the federal government's investment in research, surveillance, and education activities related to ASD. The act dedicated \$1.3 billion in federal funding over 5 years to support these efforts, implemented through several federal agencies including MCHB to support nearly 100 grantees.

The evaluation sought to measure the grantee's impact on MCHB's Autism CARES objectives:

- Train professionals to use valid and reliable screening and diagnostic tools and to provide evidence-based interventions for ASD/DDs.
- Increase awareness of ASD/DDs.
- Support research on evidence-based interventions for ASD.
- Promote the development of evidence-based guidelines for interventions.
- Improve the infrastructure and system of services for individuals with ASD/DDs.
- Reduce barriers to screening and diagnosis.

This contract built on two previous evaluation iterations. Insight—

- Conducted document reviews and in-depth, semistructured interviews
- Used web-based data collection techniques

- Prepared Report to Congress by Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as mandated under the act
- Prepared final report and fact sheets for four MCHB grant programs

Products

Final report, Efforts to Improve Autism Spectrum Disorder Service Delivery Under the Autism CARES Act: Research, Training, and State Systems Grants for FY 2014–2017, Final Report (2018), available at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/autism-cares-act-report.pdf>

Report to Congress, Young Adults and Transitioning Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder (2017), available at https://iacc.hhs.gov/publications/report-to-congress/2017/report_to_congress_2017.pdf

Fact sheet, Building the Evidence Base: Key Findings From an Evaluation of the Autism CARES Research Program (2018), available at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/autism-cares-research-program-factsheet.pdf>

Fact sheet, Building and Improving Systems of Care: Key Findings From an Evaluation of the Autism CARES State Systems Grant Program (2018), available at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/autism-cares-state-systems-grant-program-factsheet.pdf>

Fact sheet, Training Professionals in Service Delivery: Key Findings From an Evaluation of the Autism CARES Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics Training Program (2018), available at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/dbp-factsheet.pdf>

Fact sheet, Training Professionals in Service Delivery: Key Findings From an Evaluation of the Autism CARES Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Other Related Disabilities Training Program (2018), available at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/mchb/lend-factsheet.pdf>