

Early autism intervention key for kids like Jack

Cath Hart, May 14, 2007

<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,20867,21725112-23289,00.html>

Autism and related conditions such as Asperger Syndrome and Rhett's syndrome cost the Australian community up to \$7 billion each year, according to a new report on the economic impact of the disorder.

The report, due to be released in Brisbane today at the start of Autism Awareness Week, analyses healthcare costs, education, social services, unemployment and informal care related to people with autism. Unemployment of people with autism was the greatest burden, at an estimated \$3.63 billion a year.

Autism spectrum disorders, which affect one in 160 Australians, are characterised by impaired social activity, communication and imagination. An estimated 30,000 Australian children suffer from the conditions.

Synergy Economic Consulting, which prepared the report for the Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit, described its modelling as "conservative". The report recommends greater investment in early intervention strategies that "maximise" the capabilities of people with autism.

"If this improves education and employment outcomes for even a small number of people, the benefits -- via reduction in costs and improvements in quality-of-life outcomes -- will be sizeable," the report says.

The report was commissioned by AEIOU founder and chairman James Morton, to coincide with the launch today in Bray Park, in Brisbane's outer north, of the second AEIOU centre for children with autism.

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The largely privately funded AEIOU centres provide intensive, five-day-a-week support for preschool-aged children including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and daily living skills.

Ian and Karyn Quinton's five-year-old son, Jack, has attended the AEIOU centre for 18 months and has shown significant improvement. The school teachers moved from Toowoomba, 130km west of Brisbane, last year so that Jack could attend the centre.

"We've got 35 years of school teaching between us but we just couldn't communicate with him," Mr Quinton said.

"The big changes for Jack have been that he's got much better eye contact and he enjoys going to school every day."

Senate: Questions on Notice

See http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au/piweb/view_document.aspx?ID=862&TABLE=NOTICES

Notice given 19 April 2007

...

3145 **Senator McLucas:** To ask the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—

(1) (a) How many people in Australia have autism or related disorders; (b) of this number, how many people: (i) receive disability services funded through the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA), and (ii) do not receive disability services funded through the CSTDA.

(2) (a) Who represents people with autism/ASD on the National Disability Advisory Council (NDAC); and (b) what relationship do these members have with autism/ASD representative groups.

3147 **Senator McLucas:** To ask the Minister for Human Services—With reference to the report of the Australian Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders, *The prevalence of autism in Australia — can it be established from existing data?*, released on 5 March 2007,

(1) Given that data from Centrelink was regarded as especially useful, why did Centrelink not provide researchers with a breakdown, by state, of the number of people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) who receive a Carer Allowance, a Disability Support Pension or other benefits.

(2) (a) Will a breakdown of the number of Carer Allowances relating to autism spectrum disorders be available to researchers in future; and (b) can Centrelink data for autism-related Carer Allowances be provided annually.

(3) (a) Is Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) a severe and pervasive disorder; and (b) does Centrelink identify persons diagnosed with PDD-NOS; if not, why not.

...

Notice given 22 May 2007

*3208 **Senator Allison:** To ask the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—Is the National Disability Advisory Council (NDAC) still functioning; if so: (a) who represents people with autism or autism spectrum

disorders (ASD) on the NDAC; and (b) what relationship do these members have with autism/ASD representative groups.

***3209 Senator Allison:** To ask the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—

(1) Given that researchers recently released a report on the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Australia and given that, while data from Centrelink was regarded as especially useful, Centrelink did not provide the researchers with breakdowns of statistics by state: Why did Centrelink not provide ASD researchers with a breakdown, by state, of the number of people with ASD who receive a Carer Allowance, a Disability Support Pension or other benefits.

(2) Will a state-by-state breakdown of the number of Carer Allowances relating to autism spectrum disorders be available to researchers in future.

(3) Can Centrelink data for autism-related Carer Allowances be provided to researchers annually.

(4) (a) Is Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) a severe and pervasive disorder; and (b) does Centrelink identify persons diagnosed with PDD-NOS; if not, why not.

***3210 Senator Allison:** To ask the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—

(1) (a) According to official government sources, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and/or the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), how many Australians have autism and related disorders; and (b) is this information contained in more than one source; if so, what are the differences between the sources.

(2) (a) Is the Minister aware of the recent report on autism prevalence given to the department by the Autism Advisory Board for Autism Spectrum Disorders, which shows that 1 in 160 Australian children aged from 6 to 12 years has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD); and (b) is there a difference between the prevalence of autism/ASD reported from official government sources and community sources.

(3) Is the Minister aware that pervasive developmental disorders, including autism spectrum disorders such as Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder and Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified, are by definition 'severe and pervasive disorders'.

(4) Is the Minister aware that the AIHW has reported that people with autism/ASD are most likely to have a severe or profound level of disability.

(5) Does the Government accept and recognise that autism/ASD is one of the most common types of disability experienced by Australian children.

(6) (a) How many Australians with autism and related disorders receive disability services that are funded through the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA); and (b) how many Australians with autism and related disorders do not receive disability services through the CSTDA.

(7) How many Australians with a severe or profound disability due to autism/ASD does the Government recognise as not requiring disability services.

(8) (a) Does the Government provide disability services on the basis of relative need; if so, how does the government ensure disability services are provided on the basis of 'relative

need'; and (b) how many Australians who receive services do not have severe or profound disability.

***3211 Senator Allison:** To ask the Minister representing the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs—

(1) How many, or what proportion of, Australians with a severe or profound disability need no government-funded disability services.

(2) (a) Given the limited resources that the Government has available to provide disability services, how does the Government ensure that it provides essential services for the people who need them the most; and (b) is this outcome achieved through the Government's policy of setting priority for service provision based on the 'relative need' of people with a disability.

(3) What measures ensure the Government's 'relative need' policy is effective.

(4) Given that the inquiry by the Community Affairs Committee into the Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement (CSTDA) found that substantial numbers of people with disabilities do not receive essential services, will the Government increase CSTDA funding significantly in the 2008-09 Budget; if so, how much of the unmet need will the funding increase eliminate.

More Questions on Notice...

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOTICE PAPER

www.aph.gov.au/house/info/notpaper

No. 168

TUESDAY, 22 MAY 2007

***5755 MS ROXON:** To ask the Minister for Health and Ageing -

- (1) What is the current prevalence rate of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Australian children and young adults.
- (2) Does the figure provided in response to Part (1) represent an increase in the rate previously used to plan service provision; if so, by what amount has the figure increased.
- (3) What was the previous level of treatment and rehabilitation services for people with ASD.
- (4) How has the Government increased service levels to meet demand for treatment and rehabilitation for people with ASD.
- (5) Where does autism/ASD rank on the list of "Leading causes of burden of disease and injury in children aged 0-14 years".
- (6) What steps has the Government taken to ensure people with autism/ASD receive the treatment and rehabilitation they need.
- (7) How does Australian law protect the rights of children with autism/ASD to receive the treatment and rehabilitation they need.
- (8) Can people with ASD who do not qualify as having an intellectual disability access the new Medicare rebate for people with an intellectual disability; if not, will the Government create a rebate scheme for people with ASD who are unable "to recognise and communicate symptoms".

Convenor's message

Dear A4 member

This month I feel like I am experiencing a degree of writer's block. I'm sorry, but this seems harder to write than usual.

Some time ago, Christopher Pyne MHR announced a new Medicare item (see the item [Correspondence: new Medicare item](#) in this Update). Eventually, the response came from Senator Mason, the latest Secretary to the Minister for Health. The letter reveals a decision that excludes people with ASD who do not have an intellectual disability. The letter shows people with ASD (or their representatives or advocates) were not consulted and the process did not include anyone we recognise as having specific knowledge of ASD.

This is clearly discrimination. However, Section 45 of the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act* makes discrimination such as this lawful discrimination and protects it under Australian law.

I just wonder, if we cannot even get the littlest things right, what possible hope can there be that the big issues will be addressed appropriately.

Since the last newsletter, I met with Senator Nigel Scullion, the latest Minister for Community Services. We met during the Budget session. We had a fairly frank discussion about the lack of performance of FaCSIA in relation to ASD.

When we met, I had scanned the federal Budget. From what I could see, it did very little for people with ASD. The word "autism" appears once in the federal Budget (and Aspergers does not appear). You might like to go to your state government website and search the state budget for these words.

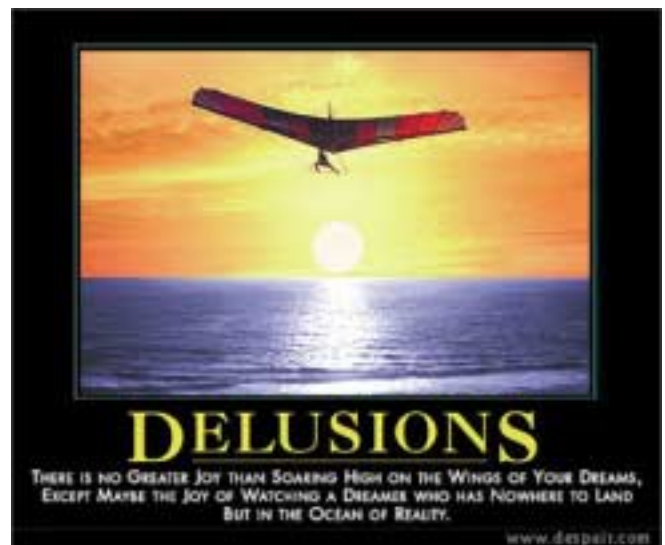
There are a few mentions of "disability" in the Budget but few of them offer much benefit for people with ASD. As with previous budgets, some measures for people with a disability actually discriminate against people with ASD.

Senator Scullion's staff said they would help me get a meeting with Senator Mason.

Back in December 2006, I wrote to the Prime Minister about the serious challenges that the growing number of people with ASD face, and present to various sections of Government. As yet, he has not acknowledged receiving the letter. It is increasingly unlikely that the Prime Minister will respond to my letter.

In relation to the decade old Bringing Them Home Report, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue observed recently that the Prime Minister "just doesn't get it or he doesn't care". It seems the same may be said for ASD.

However, compared to the Labor Party I feel like some of the lesser Liberals "get it" albeit in some very small ways. So far, the Labor Party is intent on seeing disability in simplistic terms mostly around physical and sensory issues, and even then disability is an issue they would rather avoid as much as possible. The federal Labor Party has an enormous opportunity to work with their state Labor colleagues ... but there is no discernible sign that Labor at either level of Government has even the slightest desire to do so.



Both Mal Brough MP, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, and Labor want Aboriginal children to learn English¹. From my perspective, all Australian children need to learn English to the best of their ability, especially children with autism, many of whom have enormous difficulty learning to communicate.

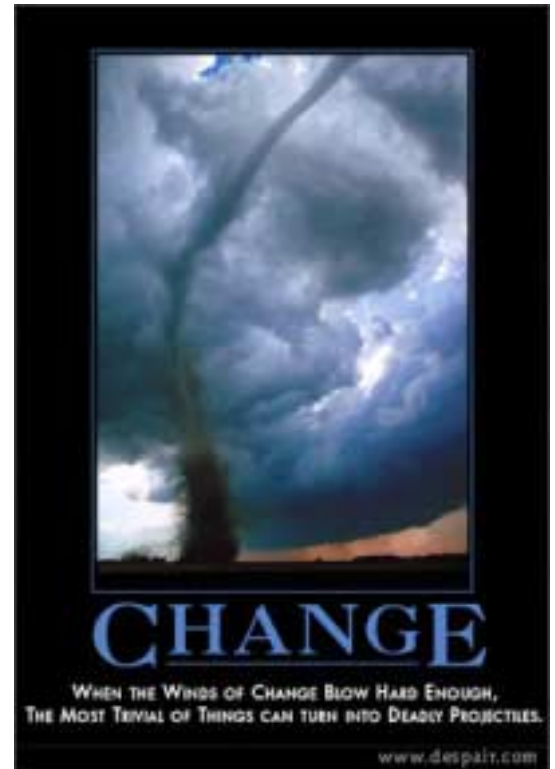
Notice how they get you both ways? They say ... we can't focus on a particular group such as kids with autism, it has to be all kids with a disability. Oh, but it would be too hard to try to teach all children who need extra help with English and communications, we have to focus on a particular group.

I will press on with meetings and our efforts to improve government-funded services for people with ASD.

We owe a big vote of thanks to Dr James Morton and his friends for doing the first serious cost analysis for ASD in Australia. This provides us with ammunition in a political battle. It gives the Government and the community a measure of the impact of ASD expressed in terms that they may recognise and respond to.

Neither Liberal nor Labor can lay claim to good economic credentials going into an election if they continue to ignore a \$4b to \$7b section of the economy.

Regards
Bob Buckley
27/5/2007



Research reviews target parents

Perhaps you have read the recent reviews of autism and ASD research, such as Roberts & Prior report available from the federal Health Department. You may be one of many who found these reports unclear, confusing and difficult to understand.

If so, you could look at the UK website <http://www.researchautism.net/interventionlist.ikml>. It has a simple assessment of the research behind many of the treatments suggested for ASD.

Of course, not everyone will agree with the assessments on the website but that seems to be how it goes with ASD. If you ask 5 experts what is best for your child, you are likely to get 10 or more conflicting recommendations... and most of the experts will "bag out" the others.

Autism Awareness TV Commercial

A group of people (in Sydney?) has put together a Public Service Announcement TV Commercial. I have not seen it on TV yet... hopefully soon.

Check out the website ... <http://www.autismawareness.com.au/tvc.htm>

Well done, guys. Hopefully the TV stations will give it some air time.

¹ See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200705/s1932795.htm> and <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200705/s1933005.htm>

Book Review: *the Patient from Hell*

Bob Buckley

The ABC Health Report interviewed² climatologist Professor Stephen Schneider about his book, *the Patient from Hell*. The transcript is on the ABC website.

This book may not interest many people with ASD or their carers. It will not be for everyone. It says nothing about ASD.

The book is about Stephen Schneider's cancer treatment and the processes he experienced. I am writing about it because it gives an interesting perspective on treating serious disorders in the absence of well developed protocols and clear statistics from comprehensive clinical trials. Some people may find the subject is generally interesting though the specifics are not relevant for them.

Schneider points out that science offers methods for deciding a course of action based on available data, not just on clinical trials. He mentions a Bayesian approach that considers all the available information, and updates plans as new information becomes available. He points out that patients are individuals with individual responses to treatments ... so it may not be best to treat an individual who is not an average or median patient in the way considered best for an average or median patient.

This message rang a bell for me. My experience is that people with ASD are not "average" or "median". Instead, they seem to me to be especially "individual". So I am interested in good science for addressing non-average situations.

Schneider's book contains a lot of personal experience of the treatment he got for his relatively rare cancer. But he talks in some detail about medical processes and their associated decision making.

The approach discussed in the book is for people who want to be involved in decisions about their child's treatment and education. It discusses how to ask questions and what to do with the answers. If this is what you need, it offers possible strategies and ammunition that might help families in their individual battle for better treatment for their child.

Some professionals will find Schneider's approach challenging — which is the basis for the book's title. But the best professionals want the best outcomes for their clients/patients, and this approach can contribute to achieving best outcomes.

Schneider discusses the role of the patient's advocate throughout the book. He sees this as a crucial role but he seems to me to be variable in writing about it — sometimes in detail while at other times he is more focused on his own (patient) issues. While parents of a child with ASD might prefer to read more of the advocate's perspective, he cannot really be criticized for telling his own story.

He gives examples of using the internet to bring the latest information into consideration. He talks about using formal decision analysis methods in planning medical treatment.

If this interests you, go to the ABC website and read the transcript of the interview. For people reading this newsletter, this will probably provide more than enough information. If you want to know more, you can order the book. Or you could print the transcript and suggest some of the professionals you deal with read Schneider's book.

² See <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/healthreport/stories/2006/1711788.htm> or <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/healthreport/stories/2007/1854032.htm>

Watch this video and raise money for Autism

Autism Speaks created a music video of the Five for Fighting song, "World" which features images of autistic children and their families.

The band is generously donating \$0.49 to Autism Speaks for each time the video is viewed.

When you have a moment, please visit the link below to watch the video and pass it along to your friends and family. They are aiming for 10,000 hits, but hopefully we can help them surpass this goal. There is no cost, obligation, or solicitation. It just takes a moment of your time. <http://www.whatkindofworldyouwant.com/videos/view/id/213154>

Autism costing Aust up to \$7b: report

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200705/s1921975.htm>

A new report has found the treatment of autism and related conditions such as Asperger syndrome are costing the Australian economy up to \$7 billion a year.

It was commissioned by Dr James Morton, one of the founders of the Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit.

Dr Morton says the report's release in Brisbane today has been timed to mark the start of Autism Awareness Week.

"It's really gone under the radar. It's exploded in the last 10 years. Some of the studies suggest that the incidence has increased 10-fold in the last decade," he said.

"I think that is why it's caught government unawares. It wasn't anywhere near the problem it is now 10 years ago."

Dr Morton says the official response to the rising incidence of autism has been too little, too late.

"I hope that this study brings [autism] to the community's attention and leads to funding for early detection and early intervention, which makes an enormous difference and is very under-funded in this country," he said.

Autism costs community \$7 billion annually: report

The World Today - Monday, 14 May, 2007 12:24:00

Reporter: Kathryn Roberts

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2007/s1922504.htm>

ELEANOR HALL: With one in every 160 children in Australia diagnosed with autism, a new report has put the cost of the condition on the community at \$7 billion a year.

The report was commissioned by Queensland's only private education facility for children with autism disorders.

The facility's founder, Dr James Morton, says the cost of providing early intervention programs would be far less than the cost of not doing so.

In Brisbane, Kathryn Roberts reports.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: When Judy Brewer Fischer's son was diagnosed with autism 10 years ago, there were few services in rural Australia where she lived, so the family was forced to move to Canberra to get help.

She says even there it was a struggle to access an early intervention program.

JUDY BREWER FISCHER: When I think back to that time, and I realise how hard it was for us and for all families, because autism was certainly not very well understood then, and ... although it had been around, diagnosis was available for a long time.

What I'm horrified about is that it's not much better for families now, 10 years on.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: Judy Brewer Fischer says governments talk up the importance of education but fail to recognise children with special needs.

JUDY BREWER FISCHER: One thing that's really hit me this week has been with the Federal Budget delivery, and talk about education and every child reaching their potential, but children with various disabilities, but particularly with developmental disabilities just haven't had a look in.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: For her son, early intervention has made a world of difference. He has been able to attend a mainstream school, which means he can start his education. But the family isn't alone.

A landmark Australian study recently found that one in every 160 children in the six to 12 age group has an autism spectrum disorder.

The Advisory Board on Autism Spectrum Disorders, which commissioned the report, says those children need 15 to 20 hours of early intervention every week, but most receive just four or five hours.

And according to a new report out today, in the long run that's costing the community \$7 billion a year.

Dr James Morton is the founder of Queensland's only private early intervention facility, which has released the report. He says the cost to the community includes healthcare, education, informal care and unemployment.

JAMES MORTON: The cost of providing every child with autism in Australia, adequate early intervention would be in the vicinity of between \$50-million and \$70-million a year.

The cost saving of providing every child with autism early intervention services is about \$2.5-billion a year. So the costs of early intervention, even though they are high on an individual child basis, pale in comparison with downstream cost savings that are available if government were to invest in providing these services.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: Dr Morton established the Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit when his son was diagnosed with the condition.

JAMES MORTON: So by targeting those early years, we can take children who are non-verbal and teach them how to speak. We can teach them how to look people in the eye, we can teach them to engage, we can teach them how to learn in a mainstream environment.

And the aim is that by getting these children from early intervention to attend mainstream school, you're putting them on the pathway to eventual independence, to finding a job.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: Of the 12 children in the original group, nine are now in mainstream schooling with little or no assistance in the classroom. Around Australia, parents of children with autism have shared similar stories about their fight to access early intervention.

Meredith Ward from Autism Victoria says families are waiting three years to have their child diagnosed. Her son was able to access a program, which has given him vital communication skills.

MEREDITH WARD: When you have a child with autism, they can't communicate with you. So, you're actually, you know, so there's lots of tantrum-ing and going on because the child can't make you understand what is it they want.

And so, by going into early intervention services with people who know and understand autism, you can start to work on ways to communicate with your child, to become connected with your child, because your child has up until that time, been totally disconnected from the world around them.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: Dr James Morton says what is needed is funding for diagnosis, early intervention programs, respite for families, and research.

Importantly, he says the Government needs to reconsider the way it hands out its funding because a centre like his misses out.

JAMES MORTON: The anomaly of the funding here is that if any of our children were to attend a mainstream centre, that centre would receive Federal Government funding of up to \$19,000 to facilitate the inclusion of these children.

But centres such as ours, which are specialised centres, are specifically excluded from receiving this funding, so you've got kids receiving childcare in our centre, getting a high quality early education with no Federal Government funding, and you have children in a mainstream centre, getting no educational program and receiving \$19,000 of Federal Government funding.

KATHRYN ROBERTS: A spokesman for the Federal Families and Community Services Minister Mal Brough, says he's looking closely at the issue even though these services are traditionally a state government responsibility.

ELEANOR HALL: Kathryn Roberts in Brisbane with that report.

Correspondence: new Medicare item

From: Bob Buckley - A4 Convenor

Sent: Wednesday, 7 February 2007 6:57 PM

To: Pyne, Chris (MP)

Subject: new Health check Medicare item and people with Autism

Dear The Hon. Christopher Pyne MP,

I see from your recent press release that the federal government introduced "a new Medicare rebate for people with an intellectual disability" (see <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr07-cp-pyn006.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2007&mth=2>)

The press release says "the new [Medicare] item recognised that people with an intellectual disability had complex health needs that were difficult to adequately assess because of the patient's inability to recognise and communicate symptoms". Hopefully, people with both an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and an intellectual disability will benefit from this new Medicare item.

But many people with ASD will miss out. A significant number of people with ASD do not have an intellectual disability, but they do have complex health needs that are difficult to assess due to their communication disorder. Without access to this or a similar scheme, many people with ASD will continue to miss out on effective health care. Can we ensure people with ASD but without intellectual disability can also benefit from this scheme? Would you consider extending eligibility for this new Medicare item to include people with ASD?

sincerely

Bob Buckley

Convenor - Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia

In his response (see www.a4.org.au/documents/CP070207response.tif) on 16/2 the Minister says...

Eligibility criteria are yet to be finalised. This will be undertaken as part of the formal consultative process over the next few months with the medical profession through the Medicare benefits Consultative Committee. The Committee will develop the clinical content of the item. Your comments will be put forward as part of this process for consideration.

Subject: Re: new Health check Medicare item and people with Autism

Date: Sat, 03 Mar 2007 00:16:52 +1100

From: Bob Buckley - A4 Convenor

To: Christopher Pyne MP

Dear Mr Pyne MHR

Thank you for your letter dated 16 FEB 2007. I appreciate the information you provided.

I note that the initial press release said

the new item recognised that people with an intellectual disability had complex health needs that were difficult to adequately assess because of the patient's inability to recognise and communicate symptoms.

It seemed that the need for the new Medicare item relates to a need for extra time where complex needs and challenges recognising and communicating symptoms may be an issue. However, your response refers only to "patients who have an intellectual disability" ... criterion that excludes most people with ASD including many with complex needs and little ability to recognise and communicate symptoms. The language in your letter shows eligibility criteria that already exclude many people with ASD ... and only the IQ cut-off level has yet to be finalised.

If this is not the case, please would you assure me that the new Medicare item is intended for people/patients with limited ability to recognise and communicate symptoms, and not just for people with an intellectual disability?

You mention a "formal consultative process". You say "Your comments will be put forward as part of this process for consideration".

My comments were not intended for that purpose. I doubt they would work well. How is this a proper consultation process? Please, can the ASD community be properly consulted for once? I have not been able to find contact information for the Medicare Benefits Consultative Committee. Can A4 talk to the Medicare Benefits Consultative Committee directly, or must everything we say filter through your office?

We note Disability Discrimination Commissioner Graeme Innes AM put out a press release congratulating the government unreservedly (see http://www.hreoc.gov.au/media_releases/2007/8_07.html). This indicates the Disability Discrimination Commissioner is oblivious to or condones the discriminatory nature of the eligibility criteria described in the press releases.

The HREOC press release says ...

"This decision has occurred following lengthy negotiations between the Government, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the disability sector."

The ASD sector was not consulted ... **as usual**.

Please, if there is still an opportunity, then please consult the ASD community on this issue. Just a little consultation would be a welcome change. It needn't take long.

regards

Bob Buckley

Commentary

The new Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing is Senator Brett Mason responded on 18/4 (see www.a4.org.au/documents/BM070418.pdf). Despite our concerns, there was no consultation with anyone I am aware of having knowledge or experience of the specific needs of people with ASD.

This new Medicare item is listed in the Budget as being restricted to people with an Intellectual Disability.

So far, I have not had a response from Senator Mason to my ongoing requests for a meeting.

If the ASD community cannot even be heard on a small matter like this, there is little prospect their views will be considered in regard to larger and more serious issues.

Winter Sport

Helen, who proof reads A4 Updates, suggests people with ASD interested in winter sports can check out the Disabled Winter Sports Association (<http://www.disabledwintersport.com.au>). She says "On becoming a member, our son and his carer get lift tickets and private lessons at ½ price. They have their own accommodation and camps for kids as well as families."

South Coast School (NSW) reunion

South Coast School for Children with Autism: is celebrating 21 years of service to the community. We would like to invite all our past students, parents, donors, staff and volunteers to a reunion on September 15, 2007. Contact: Tina at chrisand-at-uow.edu.au or Jenni on (02) 42852393.

A4 Contacts

A4 is a grassroots organisation. All A4 activity, such as publishing the Updates (newsletters), is done by volunteers. Please understand that A4 volunteers may have no training or qualifications for their various roles. They do the best they can for people with ASD, their families and associates. A4 welcomes assistance and constructive criticism.

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