

July, 2009

Vol 2, Issue 7

Autism Monthly NJ

Hope everyone had an exciting and relaxing July 4th weekend! Now that vacation time is over and it's back to the daily grind of everyday life, take a few moments to read up on all the events that AFSNJ and The Family Resource Network have in store for the upcoming months, as well as some new information regarding the H1N1 virus and the insurance reform act.



**Autism Family
Services of
New Jersey**

Join our Mailing List!

Beach Bash and Seaside Soiree Coming Soon!



As of the end of May, we have been notified that registration has been closed for Surfers Healing Surf Camp, but registration for the Beach Bash is still open and waiting for your family to sign up! This full day, family fun event is free to families and friends caring for someone with autism, but you must register first!

The Beach Bash is far more than surfing, so make sure your family doesn't miss out on the greatest beach event all year! Call (877) 237-4477 or [click here](#) for the registration page. Visit the Autism Family Services of NJ [website](#) for updated information.

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"Get Your Feet Wet" with Swimming, S'mores and More!

Enjoy all the best summer activities during Ramapo for Children's inaugural Get Your Feet Wet program, set for Saturday, August 22 through Saturday, August 29, 2009.

The one-week summer camp provides a great opportunity for campers who haven't been to sleep-away camp before to experience a wide range of creative projects, sports, and outdoor experiences. Swimming, crafts, hikes, cookouts, and sing-alongs are among the activities and special events planned for the week.



Each summer, Ramapo serves more than 400 children with special needs, ages 5 to 16, in a beautiful, engaging outdoor environment about two hours from New York City.

For more information, please (845) 876-8403 or e-mail mkunin@ramapoforchildren.org.

National Caregivers Conference Announces Keynote Speaker



We proudly announce our keynote speaker, Doug Ulman. Doug is a three-time cancer survivor and national cancer survivorship advocate. After overcoming chondrosarcoma during his sophomore year in college and malignant melanoma twice since, in 1997 Doug founded the Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults, a non-profit organization to provide support, education, and resources to young adults, their families and friends who are affected by cancer. To learn more about Doug Ulman visit our [keynote page](#).

Our dedication is as strong as ever to providing caregivers with the knowledge and support to the always changing issues that might affect their lives.

Please join us on Thursday, October 29, 2009 at the Woodbridge Hotel and Conference Center to meet new people from around the country, spend time catching up with old friends, and return home with a refreshed outlook on caregiving.

For more information about how you can be a part of this fantastic event please call the Family Support Center of NJ (732) 528-8080 and a staff member will be ready to assist you.

Visit www.nationalcaregiversconference.org regularly for event updates!

Autism Family Services of NJ to Host Walk-a-thon!

Join us on Sunday, October 11, 2009 as Autism Family Services of NJ, The Family Resource Network, and its other affiliates, host a state-wide Walk-a-thon titled "Walk for a Brighter Tomorrow" at Roosevelt Park, in Edison, New Jersey. This will be a fun filled day for families and friends to walk in support of their loved ones. A casual 5k Walk, entertainment and refreshments will be just a few of the day's highlights.

Call your family, friends and co-workers and start a walk team today! You can find more information and register online at www.walkforabrightertomorrow.org or via phone 1-800-FRN-2345. When registering to walk please note that you can choose to direct all of your money raised specifically to Autism Family Services. Just choose AFSNJ from the drop down menu on the online registration form.



Please join us in our continuing efforts to provide low-cost quality services to New Jersey families living with developmental disabilities and chronic illness. You can make a difference!

AFSNJ Awarded Horizon Foundation Grant



The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey



A recent article in the daily Schaefer Report stated, "Mothers (Parents) of Children with Autism Have Higher Parental Stress, Psychological Distress" ...as if you didn't know! AFSNJ intends to begin to address these issues with a 3 part workshop series this fall, with help from the Horizon Foundation for NJ, that deals with the needs and stresses of families as

caregivers. Self-nurture, personal health care, and sibling issues will all be discussed and parents (both moms and dads) will be encouraged to attend these free workshops through pre-registration. To add some ease to that stress, we will be providing on-site care for the children and adult children of attendees.

At this point, we are deeply into the planning phase, with summer graduate student Amanda Villamar assisting with the content and logistics. We have been in close contact with POAC to assist with our planning, implementation, and parental outreach.

Please visit our [website](#) and look for an announcement in our next issue of Autism Monthly for a more detailed description and registration information.

Kidz Korner Programs Being Upgraded, Probably Expanded

The Family Resource Network operates 4 after-school programs in Edison, Newark, Toms River, and Berkeley. Known as Kidz Korner, these programs serve school-aged kids with a variety of activities and services through a number of funding services, particularly the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Over the next year, these programs will be phased under the umbrella of AFSNJ, and will become more recognizable and standardized through curriculum and program development.

To assist us with this revamp, Cyndee Policastro-Smith, the long-time teacher of the Toms River program, will become our Program Coordinator. Cyndee's experience, talent, and commitment to kids with autism and their families (she continues to serve the Toms River District as a special education teacher specializing in autism) will serve AFSNJ well. We will begin with a look at our Toms River and Berkeley programs, and then seek to expand efforts in Edison and Middlesex County. We eventually intend to "brand" the Kidz Korner program and have it available throughout the state.

Please visit our [website](#) often for updates and announcements.

Bounce Out the Stigma!



Bounce Out The Stigma Summer Basketball Camp, the first and only camp of its kind, creates an inviting atmosphere of counselor and peer support-and peer interaction-in which special children experience a fresh sense of freedom. In developing new motor skills through participation and personal success, our campers are taught to aim higher, tackling everyday challenges and troubles with greater confidence.

[Available Camp Dates & Locations:](#)

Session 2: August 3 - 7 Chatham ECLC School

Session 3: August 10 - 14 HoHoKus Public School

Session 4: August 17 - 21 Bloomfield Middle School

For more information or to register contact Pat Connelly (973) 244-0850.

To learn more about Mighty Mike Simmel visit www.bounceoutthestigma.com.

[Click here](#) to view an informational flier.

Respite Workbook for Families and Care Providers Now Available

The Family Support Center of NJ, the sister organization of AFSNJ, is distributing comprehensive patient information tools that can be entrusted to a temporary care or respite provider. "About Our Family - A Respite Workbook for Families & Care-Providers" is a product of the Child Neurology Foundation and is distributed free of charge by the Family Support Center. Call (732) 528-8080 or (800)FSC-NJ10 and a friendly staff member will mail you a free copy today!

Division of Developmental Disabilities Fairs Well in '10 State Budget

Although many reductions and cuts were made in the Corzine Budget for FY 2010, the Department of Human Services, which oversees the Division of Developmental Disabilities, experienced few cuts, hold the line in most categories, and a few increases. With the cost of living, fuel, insurance, and other operating costs going up, organizations and agencies will need to continue their belt-tightening as the demand for services continues to rise.

Listed here are highlights from the 2010 budget as forwarded to us from Commissioner Velez' Office.

- Elimination of premiums for NJ FamilyCare Children between 150-200% Federal Poverty Level
- Continuation of parent enrollment in NJ FamilyCare
- No Medicaid co-pays for services and no cuts to Medicaid optional services (of particular interest to people with developmental disabilities and the families caring for them)
- Olmstead funding to move people into the community from institutional settings; \$6.4M for the Division of Mental Health Services and \$14.3M for the Division of Developmental Disabilities. This includes annualized FY'09 funding and FY'10 appropriations.
- \$8M continues outpatient hospital and community psychiatric services for individuals 22 and over
- Over \$12M for the Division of Developmental Disabilities' Community Services Waiting List
- No service or program reductions for clients in the General Assistance program
- Approximately \$9M to expand eligibility from 135% to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Food Stamp programs
- No change to co-pays for child care
- No service reductions in the divisions of Disability Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Addiction Services, or the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Parents & Caregivers of Children with Autism Sought for Douglass Study

Doctoral Candidate Suzannah Ferraioli, MS, is seeking parents and caregivers to compare the effects of parent training programs addressing parental stress in raising a child with autism. Ferraioli is an advanced Ph.D. candidate in clinical psychology with extensive experience in working with families of children with autism.

The study will compare two approaches to parent training, and participants will be randomly assigned to one of these groups. Sessions will be conducted on the Douglass Campus of Rutgers University in New Brunswick. Participation will include attendance at a weekly, 2-hour meeting over 8 weeks as well as completing some questionnaires. There is no fee for participation and at the program's conclusion, participants will be paid \$50 for their efforts. The study is sponsored by the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center.

If you are interested or seek additional information, please contact Suzannah Ferraioli, or Douglass DD Center Director Dr Sandra Harris at 732-932-3017.

An important message to New Jersey's developmental disabilities community from the Division of Developmental Disabilities and The Arc of New Jersey about the H1N1 Flu Virus

Anyone who is caring for, or cares about, someone with a developmental disability should be aware that certain underlying medical conditions often found in people with these disabilities can make them susceptible to more severe complications from the flu virus than individuals without these conditions. This is of particular concern since the World Health Organization recently declared a global H1N1 flu pandemic. It is important to note that a pandemic declaration is based on the sustained worldwide spread of H1N1, not the severity of illness caused by the virus.

We want to stress that individuals with developmental disabilities are at no greater risk of contracting the H1N1 virus than any one else. However, you should be aware that any individual who has a developmental disability that affects respiratory function has a higher risk of complications, an individual who has chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurological, neuromuscular or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus) has a higher risk of more severe complications.

These complication risks and individuals with developmental disabilities should be vigilant about taking preventative measures. This is especially critical because there is no vaccine currently available for H1N1, and seasonal flu vaccinations do not provide protection against H1N1.

Like other flu viruses, H1N1 is spread person-to-person, and anyone who comes into contact with other people could be exposed to the virus. Recommended preventative measures include washing your hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue, keeping the environment around you as clean as possible, stay alert and even cautious about attending events that may involve a large crowd, and avoid contact with anyone who is sick.

We encourage you to become knowledgeable about the H1N1 virus and stay abreast of any new developments or recommendations. Some very good sources on the Internet include:

- The World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/en/>
- The federal Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/>
- The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/er/h1n1/>

The Insurance Reform Act

By: Valerie A. Powers Smith, Esq.
AFSNJ Advisory Board Member

As of June 18, 2009, both the State of New Jersey Assembly and Senate passed a Bill, A.2238 & S.1651 (identical bills), requiring health benefits coverage for certain therapies for the treatment of autism and other developmental disabilities. The Bill is headed to the Governor's Office for signature.

Under the Bill, coverage for the following services would be mandated:

1. Screening & diagnosis for autism and other developmental disabilities;
2. Medically necessary OT, ST, and PT as prescribed through a treatment plan; coverage of these therapies is not to be denied on the basis of that the treatment is not restorative; and
3. For children under 21 years of age where the primary diagnosis is autism, medically necessary behavioral interventions based on ABA and related structured behavioral programs, as prescribed through a treatment plan.

Health plans must provide the above-listed services in the same manner as other medical conditions under the health insurance contract and with no limitations applied to behavioral interventions for a covered person under 21 years of age.

The provisions of this Bill are not to be construed to require that benefits be provided to reimburse the cost of the services provided under an IFSP or IEP, or affect any requirement to provide those services except that the required benefits do include coverage for expenses incurred by participants in an IFSP through a family cost share.

The annual maximum benefit for the above-listed services through 2011 is \$36,000. On January 1, 2012, the maximum benefit amount will be subject to an adjustment, to be promulgated by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Banking & Insurance and published in the New Jersey Register no later than February 1 of each calendar year. The annual adjustment to the maximum benefit amount shall be equal to the change in the consumer price index for all urban consumers for the nation, as prepared by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The following health plans would be subject to these mandates:

1. Health, hospital, medical service corporations (N.J.S.A. 17:48E-1, et seq., N.J.S.A. 17:48-1, et seq., and N.J.S.A. 17:48A-1, et seq.);
2. Individual health insurance policies (N.J.S.A. 17B, et seq.);
3. Group health insurance policies (N.J.S.A. 17B, et seq.);
4. Health benefits plans issued pursuant to N.J. Individual Health Coverage (N.J.S.A. 17B:27A-2, et seq.);
5. Health benefits plans issued pursuant to N.J. Small Employer Health Benefits Programs (N.J.S.A. 17B:27A-17, et seq.);

6. HMOs (N.J.S.A. 26:2J-1, et seq.);
7. State Health Benefits Program (N.J.S.A. 52:14-3D); and
8. School Employees' Health Benefits Program (N.J.S.A. 52:14-17.46-1, et seq.).

New Jersey is the 14th state to provide medically necessary care to those with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Thank you for reading Autism Monthly NJ! If you have any information you would like included in our e-zine, or know of anyone that would like to be added to our listserv, please email me at dgoldberg@familyresourcenetwork.org or click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the top right side of the newsletter.

Sincerely,

Dana Goldberg
Autism Family Services of NJ
and The Family Resource Network

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