

# Say YES to Bill C-459! Help children with autism get Medicare coverage

According to an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted in December, 2004, “nine in ten (89%) Canadians believe that their provincial healthcare program should cover the costs of the Intensive Behavioural Treatment, which has scientifically been proven to effectively treat children who suffer from autism.”

If you also believe children with autism deserve Medicare coverage for their core health need (physician-prescribed autism treatment), now is the time to let your opinion be known.

**Please say YES to Bill C-459! Help children with autism get Medicare coverage**

Yes! I support Bill C-459! I want children with autism to have Medicare coverage.

Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Riding/Constituency: \_\_\_\_\_

## Bill C-459

First Session, Thirty-eighth Parliament, 53-54 Elizabeth II, 2004-2005, House of Commons of Canada

**BILL C-459:** An Act to amend the Canada Health Act (Autism Spectrum Disorder)

First reading, November 28, 2005

Summary: The purpose of this enactment is to ensure that the cost of Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) and Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) for autistic persons is covered by the health care insurance plan of every province.

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

1. Section 2 of the Canada Health Act is renumbered as subsection 2(1) and is amended by adding the following:

Autism Spectrum Disorder

(2) For the purposes of this Act, services that are medically necessary or required under this Act include Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) and Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) for persons suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Autism is a serious developmental disorder that affects a person's ability to communicate and socially interact. The prevalence rate of autism in society is increasing and some of the latest studies suggest that at least one in every 200 people and as many as one in every 166 children born will be afflicted with an autism spectrum disorder. The cause and cure of autism are not known, however, since the 1980s the medical community has known that the application of Intensive Behaviour Intervention (IBI) based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) can help as many as 47% of children with autism develop to the extent that they are able to function as average children, indistinguishable from their peers. Such medically necessary autism treatment is the **core healthcare need** of children struggling to overcome the ravages of autism. Yet, even though the provision of this treatment is far less costly than a lifetime of social support and institutionalization for untreated children, there is not even one province in Canada that offers autism treatment under provincial public health insurance programs (Medicare). What exists is an inadequate patchwork of provincial autism “programs” under various departments of social services that are ill suited for the delivery of timely, medically necessary healthcare for children afflicted with autism. A lack of autism treatment expertise, unconscionable waiting lists, and unjustifiable age cut-offs that characterize these programs mean that children with autism have no healthcare for their core health need. They have no Medicare coverage!

The time has come for the federal government to demonstrate leadership and use its ownership of the Canada Health Act to end healthcare discrimination in Canada and ensure that children diagnosed with autism are finally able to access healthcare through Medicare.

On November 28, 2005, a Private Members' Bill was tabled in the House of Commons to do just that. By enacting Bill C-459 into law, disabled children in Canada diagnosed with autism will finally be able to access medically necessary treatment, regardless of ability to pay. During this election campaign, please send this flyer to the political candidates in your riding and ask them to confirm in writing their support for Bill C-459! Ask them to sign their support for Bill C-459 before they get your vote!

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