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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: FAV	.	
03/11/2009	.	
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The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (Justice) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause  
and insert:

Section 1. Section 381.986, Florida Statutes, is created to  
read:

381.986 Screening, evaluation of, or diagnosis for autism  
spectrum disorder.—

(1) If the parent or legal guardian of a minor who is an  
eligible individual, as defined in s. 627.6686 or s. 641.31098,  
believes that the minor exhibits symptoms of autism spectrum



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12 disorder, the parent or legal guardian may report his or her  
13 observation to a physician licensed in this state. The physician  
14 shall immediately refer the minor to an appropriate specialist  
15 for screening, evaluation of, or diagnosis for autism spectrum  
16 disorder.

17 (2) As used in this section, the term "appropriate  
18 specialist" means a qualified professional who is experienced in  
19 the evaluation of autism spectrum disorder, who has training in  
20 validated diagnostic tools, and includes, but is not limited to,  
21 a person who is licensed in this state as:

- 22 1. A board-certified behavior analyst;
- 23 2. A psychologist;
- 24 3. A psychiatrist;
- 25 4. A neurologist;
- 26 5. A developmental or behavioral pediatrician and who  
27 specializes in child neurology;
- 28 6. A speech language pathologist; or
- 29 7. A licensed professional deemed appropriate by the  
30 Children's Medical Services Early Steps Program within the  
31 Department of Health.

32 Section 2. Subsection (11) is added to section 627.6686,  
33 Florida Statutes, to read:

34 627.6686 Coverage for individuals with autism spectrum  
35 disorder required; exception.—

36 (11) Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the  
37 contrary, an insurer shall provide direct patient access for  
38 screening, evaluation of, or diagnosis for autism spectrum  
39 disorder to an appropriate specialist. As used in this  
40 subsection, the term "direct patient access" means the ability



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41 of a subscriber or insured to obtain services without a referral  
42 or other authorization before receiving services.

43 Section 3. Subsection (10) is added to section 641.31098,  
44 Florida Statutes, to read:

45 641.31098 Coverage for individuals with developmental  
46 disabilities.—

47 (10) Notwithstanding any provision of this section to the  
48 contrary, a health maintenance organization shall provide direct  
49 patient access for screening, evaluation of, or diagnosis for  
50 autism spectrum disorder to an appropriate specialist. As used  
51 in this subsection, the term "direct patient access" means the  
52 ability of a subscriber or insured to obtain services without a  
53 referral or other authorization before receiving services.

54 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009.

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56 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

57 And the title is amended as follows:

58 Delete everything before the enacting clause  
59 and insert:

60 A bill to be entitled  
61 An act relating to autism; creating s. 381.986, F.S.;  
62 requiring that a physician refer a minor to an  
63 appropriate specialist for screening for autism  
64 spectrum disorder under certain circumstances;  
65 providing a definition; amending ss. 627.6686 and  
66 641.31098, F.S.; requiring certain insurers and health  
67 maintenance organizations to provide direct patient  
68 access to an appropriate specialist for screening,  
69 evaluation of, or diagnosis for autism spectrum



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disorder; defining the term "direct patient access";  
providing an effective date.