

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to autism; creating s. 381.986, F.S.;
 3 requiring that a physician refer a minor to an appropriate
 4 specialist for screening for autism spectrum disorder
 5 under certain circumstances; defining the term
 6 "appropriate specialist"; amending ss. 627.6686 and
 7 641.31098, F.S.; defining the term "direct patient
 8 access"; requiring certain insurers and health maintenance
 9 organizations to provide direct patient access to an
 10 appropriate specialist for a minimum number of visits per
 11 year for the screening, evaluation, or diagnosis of autism
 12 spectrum disorder; providing an effective date.

13
 14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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

18 381.986 Screening for autism spectrum disorder.--

19 (1) If the parent or legal guardian of a minor who is an
 20 eligible individual, as defined in s. 627.6686 or s. 641.31098,
 21 believes that the minor exhibits symptoms of autism spectrum
 22 disorder, the parent or legal guardian may report his or her
 23 observation to a physician licensed in this state. The physician
 24 shall immediately refer the minor to an appropriate specialist
 25 for the screening for, evaluation of, or diagnosis of autism
 26 spectrum disorder. This section does not apply to a physician
 27 providing care under s. 395.1041.

28 (2) As used in this section, the term "appropriate

29 specialist" means a qualified professional who is experienced in
 30 the evaluation of autism spectrum disorder, who has training in
 31 validated diagnostic tools, and includes, but is not limited to,
 32 a person who is licensed in this state as:

- 33 (a) A psychologist;
- 34 (b) A psychiatrist;
- 35 (c) A neurologist;
- 36 (d) A developmental or behavioral pediatrician who
 37 specializes in child neurology; or
- 38 (e) A professional whose licensure is deemed appropriate
 39 by the Children's Medical Services Early Steps Program within
 40 the Department of Health.

41 Section 2. Present paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of
 42 subsection (2) of section 627.6686, Florida Statutes, are
 43 redesignated as paragraphs (d), (e), and (f), respectively, a
 44 new paragraph (c) is added to that subsection, and paragraph (a)
 45 of subsection (3) of that section is amended, to read:

46 627.6686 Coverage for individuals with autism spectrum
 47 disorder required; exception.--

- 48 (2) As used in this section, the term:
- 49 (c) "Direct patient access" means the ability of an
 50 insured to obtain services from an in-network provider without a
 51 referral or other authorization before receiving services.

52 (3) A health insurance plan issued or renewed on or after
 53 April 1, 2009, shall provide coverage to an eligible individual
 54 for:

- 55 (a) Direct patient access to an appropriate specialist, as
 56 defined in s. 381.986, for a minimum of three visits per policy

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57 year for the screening for, evaluation of, or diagnosis ~~Well-~~
58 ~~baby and well-child screening for diagnosing the presence of~~
59 autism spectrum disorder.

60 Section 3. Present paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection
61 (2) of section 641.31098, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as
62 paragraphs (d) and (e), respectively, a new paragraph (c) is
63 added to that subsection, and paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of
64 that section is amended, to read:

65 641.31098 Coverage for individuals with developmental
66 disabilities.--

67 (2) As used in this section, the term:

68 (c) "Direct patient access" means the ability of a
69 subscriber to obtain services from an in-network provider
70 without a referral or other authorization before receiving
71 services.

72 (3) A health maintenance contract issued or renewed on or
73 after April 1, 2009, shall provide coverage to an eligible
74 individual for:

75 (a) Direct patient access to an appropriate specialist, as
76 defined in s. 381.986, for a minimum of three visits per policy
77 year for the screening for, evaluation of, or diagnosis ~~Well-~~
78 ~~baby and well-child screening for diagnosing the presence of~~
79 autism spectrum disorder.

80 Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2010.