

IACC Round Robin Updates



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FEDERAL AGENCY UPDATES

Administration for Community Living (ACL)

- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has appointed Jill Jacobs as Commissioner of their Administration on Disabilities (AOD). Ms. Jacobs has over two decades of professional experience managing disability services organizations, analyzing policy, and working toward improved health and disability programs and services. She has worked at local, state, and federal levels. She was previously the Executive Director of the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia (ECNV), a center for independent living. Ms. Jacobs has also been a grassroots organizer for disability issues for more than 25 years. She is a graduate of Texas A&M at Central Texas and received social work training at Army Social Work Services at Fort Hood, Texas. More information is available at this link: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/acl-announces-jill-jacobs-commissioner-administration-disabilities>
- The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) (<https://ncapps.acl.gov/>) compiled a list of resources for person-centered practices and activities to enhance the work that supports long-term service needs of people with disabilities and older adults. The resources include a report on National Core Indicators data, wisdom from the pandemic, and more. The list of resources can be found at this link: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/person-centered-practices-resources>
- The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) at the Administration for Community Living announced two new funding opportunities under the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) Program. The funding opportunities are both focused on Community Living and Participation. Information about the funding opportunities are available here: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/two-new-disability-and-rehabilitation-research-projects-program>
- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is seeking nominations for two federal advisory councils: the RAISE Act Family Caregiving Advisory Council and the Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. For the RAISE Council, up to 15 non-federal voting members will be appointed for three-year terms, and will advise Congress on new developments, challenges, opportunities, and solutions to better support caregivers. The Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren advises Congress on issues pertaining to grandparents and older relative caregiver support, and selects up to 10 non-federal members. More information is available here: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/acl-announces-call-nominations-two-advisory-councils>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- CDC is developing a new Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), forecasted in Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view->

[opportunity.html?oppId=338446](#)), “Enhancing Public Health Surveillance of Autism Spectrum Disorder through the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network”. This will be the 6th funding cycle for ADDM Network activities. The NOFO is anticipated to post in July 2022 and applications are anticipated to be due in September 2022.

- CDC recently published revisions to the milestones presented in the Learn the Signs. Act Early. developmental milestones checklists (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>) and other materials (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/freematerials.html>). These revisions reflect a careful review of normative data and other resources, and the process by which the revisions were made is described in an article published online in Pediatrics in February 2022, titled “Evidence-informed milestones for developmental surveillance tools” (see full reference below).
- Significant Publications (since January 2022)
 - Bradley CB, Tapia AL, DiGuseppi CG, et al. Reasons for participation in a child development study: Are cases with developmental diagnoses different from controls? Paediatric and Perinatal Epidemiology. 2022 Feb 2. doi: 10.1111/ppe.12861. Epub ahead of print. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35107836/>
 - Cogswell ME, Coil E, Tian LH, et al. Health needs and use of services among children with developmental disabilities – United States, 2014–2018. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. 2022;71(12):453-458. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35324879/>
 - Farmer JE, Falk LW, Clare MJ, et al. Developmental monitoring and referral for low-income children served by WIC: Program development and implementation outcomes. Maternal and Child Health Journal. 2022;26:230-241. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34988863/>
 - Rice C, Carpenter L, Morrier M, et al. Defining in detail and evaluating reliability of DSM-5 criteria for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) among children. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders. 2022 Jan 4. doi: 10.1007/s10803-021-05377-y. Epub ahead of print. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34981308/>
 - Wiggins LD, Nadler C, Hepburn S, et al. Toileting resistance among preschool-age children with and without autism spectrum disorder. Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics. 2022 Feb 15. doi: 10.1097/dbp.0000000000001036. Epub ahead of print. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35170572/>
 - Zubler JM, Wiggins LD, Macias MM, et al. Evidence-informed milestones for developmental surveillance tools. Pediatrics. 2022;149(3):e2021052138. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35132439/>

Department of Defense (DoD) Autism Research Program (ARP)

- The Department of Defense’s Autism Research Program was appropriated \$15 million for FY22 to fund peer reviewed autism research. Three funding solicitations were recently posted (<https://cdmrp.army.mil/funding/arp>). The Clinical Trial Award, Career Development Award and the Idea Development Award will be offered this year. All

three require a pre-proposal submission that is due May 23, 2022; following the pre-proposal screening, selected applicants will be invited for full proposal submission which is due in mid-August.

Department of Education (ED)

- U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona gave a major speech to discuss his vision for investments in America's education system, stating that the nation needs to do more to ensure that all students succeed. Secretary Cardona talked about return to in-person education and emphasized that education should not return to pre-pandemic strategies. He called for an increase in funding to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to meet the needs of every eligible child with a disability. He also stated that he wants to further invest in the well-being, recruitment, and retention of special education teachers and paraprofessionals. The full speech can be found here: <https://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/priorities-speech>
- The U.S. Department of Education released its 2021 *Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. The report summarizes the nation's progress in providing a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities and early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities, ensuring that the rights of these children with disabilities and their parents are protected, assisting states and localities in providing education for all children with disabilities, and assessing the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities. More information is available at this link: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/departmentsubmits-the-43rd-annual-report-to-congress-idea>
- The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released a fact sheet (<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/factsheet-504.html>) to remind schools of their obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities during the pandemic. This obligation includes compensatory services, as many students did not receive necessary evaluations or services due to the pandemic.
- The U.S. Department of Education released a new Q&A document (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/qa-on-serving-children-with-disabilities-placed-by-their-parents-in-private-schools-revised-feb-2022/>) to provide guidance on how Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements apply to children with disabilities who are enrolled in private schools. This guidance applies to children who were not previously enrolled in their local schools, and therefore provision of a free and appropriate education (FAPE) does not apply to them. The Disability Scoop also reported on the new guidance.
- The U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is requesting applications for the Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment (SWTCIE) demonstration project, aimed at increasing access for people with disabilities to jobs that pay good wages. SWTCIE is a step toward ending practices that have allowed some employers to pay less than the federal minimum wage to people with disabilities. The new program, with \$167 million available in grant funds, will sponsor innovative approaches that allow people with disabilities to successfully

secure jobs working alongside their non-disabled peers while earning the same pay. The deadline for submissions is June 21, 2022. More information is available here: <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/education-department-launches-historic-real-pay-real-jobs-initiative-people-disabilities>. There will be a pre-application meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at 2:00 pm ET to answer questions. Participants may join the teleconference five minutes prior by dialing in at 888-251-2949 or 215-861-0694, Access Code 2540547#. The pre-application PowerPoint Presentation can be downloaded from this link: <https://ncrtm.ed.gov/Download.aspx?type=doc&id=5317>. Please email 84.421D@ed.gov for more information.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

- The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) has two programs accepting applications that seek to improve responses to people with disabilities:
 - Applications for the *FY 2022 Collaborative Crisis Response and Intervention Training Program* are due June 7, 2022. More information is available at this link: <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/o-bja-2022-171099>
 - Applications for the *FY 2022 The Kevin and Avonte Program: Reducing Injury and Death of Missing Individuals with Dementia and Developmental Disabilities* are due May 19, 2022. Information is available online: <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/opportunities/o-bja-2022-171114>
- On May 9th, from 2:00 – 3:30 pm, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) will host a webinar on *Exploring Locative Technology: What You Need to Know to Address Wandering*, presented by The Arc's National Center on Criminal Justice & Disability. Additional information, including how to register, is available at this link: <https://www.theiacp.org/events/online/exploring-locative-technology-what-you-need-to-know-to-address-wandering>
- The Academic Training to Inform Police Responses initiative has produced two new resources designed to support law enforcement agencies and communities in the development, implementation, and evaluation of crisis response programs.
 - The *Mental Health Conditions & Developmental Disabilities* resource describes mental health conditions and developmental disabilities, common behaviors and characteristics, and the differences between mental health conditions and developmental disabilities. The two-page resource can be found here: https://www.informedpoliceresponses.com/files/ugd/e7007a_d71ae0d8a7a248d2886f8ed9b37933a5.pdf
 - The *Developmental Disabilities: What Law Enforcement Officers Need to Know* resource provides examples of law enforcement encounters with people with developmental disabilities, discusses how understanding more about disabilities leads to safe and effective interactions, and provides examples of possible behaviors of people with developmental disabilities and recommended responses. The two-page resource is available online: https://www.informedpoliceresponses.com/files/ugd/e7007a_7df40364e05e4a258f1145d9357de913.pdf

Department of Labor (DOL)

- ODEP's project on Research Support Services for Employment of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum (REYAAS) has released a fact sheet (<https://www.mathematica.org/publications/advancing-opportunities-for-employment-of-young-adults-on-the-autism-spectrum>); this project is run by Mathematica in collaboration with staff at ODEP, and it maintains a project website (<https://www.mathematica.org/projects/research-support-services-for-employment-of-young-adults-on-the-autism-spectrum>).
- REYAAS is planning to run public listening sessions for stakeholders, including young adults on the autism spectrum, during this month of April, which commemorates National Autism Month in the U.S. If you or others you know would like to participate in a public listening session, please send an email to reyaas@mathematica-mpr.com to sign up for the REYAAS mailing list. Please also share this information about participating with your connections, networks, and colleagues.
- ODEP is also exploring a national online dialogue for workers and job seekers on the autism spectrum and neurodiversity at work that would run through ODEP's ePolicyWorks project (<https://epolicyworks.ideascale.com/>). This online dialogue would likely launch in the spring or summer, so stay tuned for more details to come and how to participate.
- Watch the archived video (<https://askearn.org/event/expanding-your-talent-pool-disability-inclusion-in-advanced-manufacturing>) for a webinar on the inclusion of people with disabilities in advanced manufacturing, which was held by EARN (<https://askearn.org/>), ODEP's technical assistance center for employers. It included a discussion on paths to careers for workers on the autism spectrum and other people who are neurodivergent.
- Visit the website of the Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship (PIA) (<https://inclusiveapprenticeship.org/>) to find three guides for prospective and current apprentices (<https://inclusiveapprenticeship.org/looking-for-an-apprenticeship/>), as well as four resources for employers (<https://inclusiveapprenticeship.org/resources/>) and other sponsors of apprenticeship.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- April 23, 2022, marks the 25th Anniversary of Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children From Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." This EO created EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection as well as the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, which EPA co-leads with the Department of Health and Human Services. EPA will mark the anniversary starting in April and throughout the 25th year with outreach and webinars highlighting accomplishments over the 25 years with an eye towards future efforts to protect children from environmental health risks.
- May 17-18, 2022, Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee (CHPAC) Meeting. CHPAC is a body of external researchers, academicians, health care providers, environmentalists, state and tribal government employees, and members of the public who advise EPA on regulations, research, and communications related to children's

health. More information on the May meeting will be posted soon to <https://www.epa.gov/children/chpac>

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)

- The Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health (AIR-P) (<https://airpnetwork.ucla.edu/>) and the Organization for Autism Research (OAR) recently released an RFP for Community Grant funding opportunity to promote the development of community resources that enhance the physical health of autistic individuals. These resources may enhance autistic individuals' health and quality of life directly or indirectly (i.e. by providing guidance to family members, educators, or other providers). OAR/AIR-P will award grants ranging from \$1,000-\$10,000 for up to seven (7) related projects. The projects may last up to one year. Additional information is available at this link: https://researchautism.smapply.org/prog/community_grant/
- The Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health (AIR-P) Scholars & Pilot and Feasibility Program (<https://airpnetwork.ucla.edu/air-p-scholars>) supports the next generation of researchers seeking to promote the health and well-being of autistic individuals across the lifespan. The program provides mentorship, training, and professional development for new researchers, as well as pilot and feasibility funding support. The call for applications is currently out for the September 2022-August 2023 project year. Proposals must address a topic or topics related to autism and physical health with a focus on enhancing the health and well-being of autistic people.

***Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)**

- Findings from an NIH-funded study show that the amygdala overgrowth that occurs in autism spectrum disorder may begin during infancy; these results support the initiation of treatment during the first year of life. The research team, part of the NIH Autism Centers of Excellence Infant Brain Imaging Study network, was led by Mark Shen, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Infant Brain Imaging Study. Funding was provided by NICHD, NIEHS, and NIMH. A media advisory with more information, including a citation and link for the research article, is available online: <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/newsroom/news/032522-autism-amygdala-growth>

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

- NIEHS supports a broad range of research on how environmental exposures impact human health including how early life exposures influence neurodevelopmental outcomes, such as ASD. NIEHS funded investigators are currently studying the association of a wide range of exposures, such as air pollution and pesticides with the development of autism. NIEHS supported researchers are also investigating the mechanisms by which these exposures contribute to the development of autism and autistic traits, including epigenetics, inflammation, and the microbiome.
- In addition to supporting research funding, NIEHS hosts scientific and research focused events on topics related to autism and the environment:
 - On April 11th, NIEHS hosted its annual Autism Awareness Month seminar. This event was hosted virtually and brought together Drs. John Constantino and Heather Volk who spoke about the importance of understanding the underlying

genetics to advance research on environmental factors that contribute to autism severity and can inform research on gene-environment interactions.

- On June 21-22, 2022, NIEHS is hosting a virtual workshop titled “Can Nutrition Modify the Impact of Environmental Exposures on Autism Spectrum Disorder?”. Several provocative studies have found that maternal diet and nutrition may modify the risk of autism diagnosis or other neurodevelopmental outcomes in children prenatally exposed to environmental contaminants such as air pollution or pesticides. However, this is an emerging area of research, so NIEHS is bringing together researchers in both environmental health and nutrition to discuss biologic mechanisms that may underlie these interactions and identify data gaps and opportunities for advancing this area of research. A link to register will be available in the near future.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

- **Neural responses to affective speech, including motherese, map onto clinical and social eye tracking profiles in toddlers with ASD**

Very early in life, parents and caregivers engage verbally with their infants and toddlers in a way that is often characterized by higher tones, slower speech, and repetitive use of common words. Researchers have labeled this as motherese or infant-directed speech. Recent published findings from a study supported by NIMH found that infants and toddlers diagnosed with autism displayed lower neural responsiveness to hearing their mothers’ affective speech or motherese, relative to similar-age children without autism. Additionally, investigators found that the children with autism who were less responsive to motherese also displayed lower social and language abilities. These findings point to the importance of future efforts to find new ways of promoting novel uses of maternal affective-speech to foster visual and social engagement among infants and toddlers with autism (PMID: 34980898: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34980898/>).

- **Large scale validation of an early-age eye-tracking biomarker of an autism spectrum disorder subtype**

Utilizing a large sample of infants and toddlers (N=1,863), researchers studied the performance of a novel eye-tracking measure (GeoPref Test) for use as a potential early biomarker of autism. The GeoPref Test consists of a 1-minute video of geometric shapes and social images, which the children viewed. Results from the study showed that the GeoPref Test had a low rate of false positives (2%) and high positivity rate (98%), with strong test-retest reliability, for detecting children with autism between 12-24 months of age. In addition, the brief test also worked well among children across different racial and ethnic groups. These findings indicate that eye tracking tools and other similar metrics may be critical in ensuring that children receive an early diagnosis and prompt access to intervention. Future efforts are planned to administer the tool to more young children in both research and clinical settings (PMID: 35277549: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35277549/>).

Social Security Administration (SSA)

- The Social Security Administration is working hard to meet the demands of both current and potential beneficiaries. In early April, we added more in-person appointments and

offered in-person service for people without an appointment. For people who can access our services online or by phone, we ask that they continue to do business with us online or by phone and schedule an appointment, when possible, which will better allow us to timely serve people who cannot use those options. We are constantly expanding our online services (see: <https://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices/> or <https://www.ssa.gov/espanol/serviciosporinternet/>).

- We encourage everyone, whether they receive benefits or not, to create a free and secure “my Social Security” account. You can use your account to request a replacement Social Security card, check the status of an application, estimate future benefits, or manage the benefits you already receive. To create an account visit <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>
- The next opportunity to apply for SSA’s Interventional Cooperative Agreement Program (ICAP) is coming soon! ICAP allows SSA to enter into cooperative agreements to collaborate with States, educational institutions, foundations, and other non-federal groups and organizations who have the interest and ability to identify, operate, and partially fund interventional research related to the Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income programs. ICAP is an ongoing program that will request new applications for award on a regular basis. The priority topics for research and interventions under this program are:
 - Eliminating the structural barriers in the labor market, including for racial, ethnic, or other underserved communities, including people with disabilities, that increase the likelihood of people receiving or applying for DI or SSI benefits;
 - Promoting self-sufficiency by helping people enter, stay in, or return to the labor force, including youth;
 - Coordinating planning between private and public human services agencies to improve the administration and effectiveness the DI, SSI, and related programs;
 - Assisting claimants in underserved communities apply for or appeal decisions on claims for DI and SSI benefits; and
 - Conducting outreach to people with disabilities who are potentially eligible to receive SSI.
- Please view the ICAP forecast (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=336855>) on Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>) and subscribe for updates to receive an alert when the funding opportunity application period opens.
- Today, the Social Security Administration released its first Equity Action Plan, supporting President Biden’s whole-of-government equity agenda to advance equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity for all. “Social Security’s programs touch the lives of nearly every American, providing income security for the diverse populations we serve, including people facing barriers, people with disabilities, people who are widowed, retirees, and their families,” said Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Commissioner of Social Security. “Systemic barriers may prevent people who need our programs the most from accessing them. Our Equity Action Plan will help to reduce these barriers and ensure people have

access to our services.” For more information, please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2022/#4-2022-2>

PUBLIC MEMBER UPDATES

Alice Carter

- Sheldrick RC, Carter AS, Eisenhower A, Mackie TI, Cole MB, Hoch N, Brunt S, Pedraza FM. Effectiveness of Screening in Early Intervention Settings to Improve Diagnosis of Autism and Reduce Health Disparities. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2022 Mar 1;176(3):262-269. doi: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.5380. PMID: 34982099; PMCID: PMC8728657. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34982099/>

Autism Science Foundation (ASF)

- ASF is collaborating with Phelan McDermid Syndrome Foundation and the International CDKL5 Foundation and Indiana University to host a 2-day meeting on GI issues in neurodevelopmental disorders. In addition to the meeting on June 8th-9th, we are circulating a survey (and collecting feedback on the survey) about GI symptoms in people with and without rare genetic syndromes and NDD’s. Please go to <https://www.candidgi.com/>. CANDID stands for the Consortium for Autism, Neurodevelopmental Disorders & Digestive Diseases. That’s where candidgi comes from. Please go to the website and click “take the survey” and contact ASF if you would like something for social media to circulate to your community.
- ASF just announced their undergraduate research fellowships which can be found on our new website as well as the videos from the [March 30th Day of Learning](#), which included presentations on understanding the prevalence of autism, mobile technologies for early detection and intervention, and the importance of leisure activities. Check out our new website at <https://autismsciencefoundation.org/>.

Dena Gassner

- Brown HM, Dwyer PSR, Gassner DL, Kapp SK, Ne'eman A, Ryan JG, Waisman TC, Williams ZJ. The Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health Autistic Researcher Review Board. *Pediatrics.* 2022 Apr 1;149(Suppl 4):e2020049437F. doi: 10.1542/peds.2020-049437F. PMID: 35363294. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35363294/>
- Dwyer P, Ryan JG, Williams ZJ, Gassner DL. First Do No Harm: Suggestions Regarding Respectful Autism Language. *Pediatrics.* 2022 Apr 1;149(Suppl 4):e2020049437N. doi: 10.1542/peds.2020-049437N. PMID: 35363298. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35363298/>
- *Shifting the Paradigm: Recognizing the Needs of Disabled Parents as Advocates:* <https://www.aane.org/shifting-the-paradigm-recognizing-the-needs-of-disabled-parents-as-advocates/>
- Ms. Gassner will be presenting at the Communication Strategies for Autism: Supporting Engagement, Self-Advocacy, and Transitions online conference hosted by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association from April 20 through May 2, 2022. Ms. Gassner will be speaking about the cognitive processes that underly masking and identifies the

risks of defining success as being perceived as neurotypical. More information, including registration information, is available at this link: <https://www.asha.org/events/autism/>

Hari Srinivasan

- Hari Srinivasan has been named a Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow for the Class of 2022 (<https://www.pdsoros.org/meet-the-class-of-2022>). The Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans is a \$90,000 graduate school fellowship for outstanding immigrants and children of immigrants in the United States. Hari will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Neuroscience at Vanderbilt University. More information about Hari's story is available here: <https://www.pdsoros.org/meet-the-fellows/hari-srinivasan>

Jenny Mai Phan

- Dr. Jenny Mai Phan will be speaking at the AIR-P Autism Acceptance Month Double Webinar along with Drs. Kristy Anderson and Lindsay Shea on April 19, 2022. Dr. Phan will discuss strategies for studying puberty in autism research and how to address current gaps within developmental science. More information about the webinar, including the registration link, is available here: <https://airpnetwork.ucla.edu/events/air-p-presents-autism-acceptance-month-double-webinar>

Madison House Autism Foundation

- Madison House Autism Foundation founded *Autism After 21 Day* in 2016 (<https://madisonhouseautism.org/autism-after-21/>). Subsequently, it was entered into the Congressional Record in 2018 (<https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/2018/04/19/senate-section/article/S2315-3>) by then Maryland Congressman, now Senator, Chris Van Hollen. Autism After 21 Day is observed during Autism Awareness Month on April 21st. On this day, we celebrate the abilities and contributions made by adults on the spectrum in our lives and in our communities. Madison House invites the community to join in this recognition of adults on the autism spectrum each April.

Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI)

- To support DEI, SFARI continues to offer these funding opportunities:
 - To support DEI among research subjects: <https://www.sfari.org/grant/spark-research-match-diversity-equity-and-inclusivity-request-for-applications/>
 - To support DEI among researchers: <https://www.sfari.org/grant/sfari-seed-rfa/>
- Other SFARI Funding Opportunities are always posted here: <https://www.sfari.org/funding-opportunities/>
- SFARI Resources for the research community are always posted here: <https://www.sfari.org/resources>

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Autism Speaks

- Autism Speaks celebrates World Autism Month each year. This year is the United Nation's 15th annual World Autism Awareness Day, which was on April 2. Autism Speaks highlights how community members can participate in World Autism Month, such as taking a pledge to increase the understanding and acceptance of autism. More

information is available here: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/world-autism-awareness-day>

Autism Society of America

- This April, the Autism Society is working to #CelebrateDifferences. They recognize the variety of experiences within the autism community and emphasize the need for equitable access to support, services, and resources. This press release (<https://autismsociety.org/the-autism-society-of-america-invites-you-to-celebrate-differences-during-aprils-autism-acceptance-month/>) highlights topics such as first responder training, COVID-19 impacts and response, and employment advocacy.

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

- For the second year, the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) has shifted from celebrating “Autism Awareness Month” to “Autism Acceptance Month” in response to input from autistic and other community leaders. This year, AUCD is focusing on mental health and will host a series of webinars on mental health parity laws, suicide prevention, support, and social skills development. More information is available here: https://www.aucd.org/template/news.cfm?news_id=15886&parent=16&parent_title=Home&url=/template/index.cfm

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

- For Autism Acceptance Month 2022, the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) released a statement (<https://autisticadvocacy.org/genetic-research/>) on genetic research and autism. ASAN describes their concerns about genetic research and recommends safeguards. They also list research priorities that can enhance the quality of life of autistic people.

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

- The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children has free resources and training to help caregivers, first responders, and search teams to help mitigate missing incidents for children on the autism spectrum. These resources are available online at this link: <https://www.missingkids.org/theissues/autism>

The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health

- The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health recently released the *Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and their Primary Care Team*. The toolkit is designed to assist primary care teams and their young adult patients with ID/DD to plan for disasters and emergencies. The toolkit was developed with an expert advisory group with members from major primary care professional societies and disability advocates. The toolkit can be found in both English (<https://www.thenationalalliance.org/s/FINAL-WITH-IDD-Toolkit.pdf>) and Spanish (<https://www.thenationalalliance.org/s/FINAL-WITH-IDD-Toolkit-Spanish.pdf>).

For more information on Autism Awareness Month 2022, please visit the IACC website:

<https://iacc.hhs.gov/meetings/autism-awareness-month/2022/>