

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 8, 2013

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Kids On The Move autism program now covered by Medicaid waiver

PROVO (February 8, 2013)—Families on Medicaid are now eligible to enroll in autism therapy services offered by Kids On The Move Bridges Program, in Orem.

“Families who have been able to receive services from us at our facility will now be able to access us through this new funding source. It gives us the ability to provide in-home supports and helps with professionals they know and trust,” said Laurie Bowen, Program Director for Kids On The Move Bridges.

Previously, donations and the fees participants’ families would pay funded Bridges. Participation was only available to families who could afford the high cost of the therapy.

“Unfortunately, the children with autism diagnoses in Utah continue to grow exponentially,” Bowen said. “We want to be able to help as many families and children in the unique ways they need. This requires community support and recognition.”

Since few establishments have been awarded the ability to receive Medicaid enrollees, access to therapy is difficult to find. Research shows autism therapy services can drastically help kids with autism or similar disorders develop important skills that will improve their lives.

“Bridges focuses on supporting the child in the ways that they need, but also incorporating the family and especially the parents into the service,” Bowen said. “We know that each child and family circumstance is unique and requires attention to those details that can impact improvement individually.”

The Bridges staff strives to develop individualized programs for children that cater to their needs. The programs help children learn to pay attention, engage socially, manage behavior and develop language skills.

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Families can qualify for autism therapy waiver if their child is between the ages of 2 and 5 years old and by proving their family's eligibility for Medicaid. Families will also be required to provide proof of an official autism diagnosis from a licensed clinician.

Applications for the Medicaid waiver will be accepted in the open enrollment period through the Utah Department of Health online at health.utah.gov/autismwaiver

About Kids On The Move Bridges

In response to an explosion in the number of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Kids On The Move created a new program in 2010 called "Bridges" to serve children ages 3-to-6 years old with Autism or similar disorders. Unlike other child development programs at Kids On The Move, this program is not backed by government funding. The Bridges program was developed to offer families flexible, affordable, effective services that help families get the support and education they need.

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Copy Outline—News Release

Key Public (audience) including current level of understanding of product/service:

Families with autistic children

Secondary publics (audiences), if any:

Potential donors

Action desired from public(s):

Apply for Medicaid Autism Waiver or advocate our cause by donating

News hook:

Children on Medicaid are now eligible for services in the Kids On The Move autism Bridges program

Proposed headline:

Kids On The Move Autism program now covered by Medicaid Waiver

Proposed lead:

The Medicaid Autism Waiver was recently expanded to cover services provided by the local autism program Kids On The Move Bridges.

1. Primary Message: People who qualify for Medicaid can qualify for a waiver to obtain autism therapy for their children.

Secondary:

- a. Medicaid waiver was cleared so that children on Medicaid can have access to autism services. Waiver also cleared for ABA therapy and in-home therapy
- b. A diagnostic evaluation is the first step in attaining proper treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorders. This evaluation will help provide appropriate treatment recommendations.
- c. Kids On The Move employs a number of therapists including speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists.

Influentials: Program director

How will they be used to influence the key public: she will tell how Bridges helps children and that funding is available

Proposed photos/charts(if any): Include a stock photo from Kids On The Move

Method and timing of distribution (email, fax, etc.): *email and hard copy available*

Specific media to receive release: Deseret News, Provo Daily Herald, KSL

Follow-up with media(if any): Deseret News, Provo Daily Herald, KSL

Timeline/deadline: *immediate release*