

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 150026)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing Council's Committee on the Disabled and Special Needs to hold public hearings to examine the Philadelphia Autism Project's final report and strategic plan.

WHEREAS, Autism is a complex neurological disorder that affects, to varying degrees, language and social skill development, and is characterized by challenges in communication and social interactions, repetitive behaviors and movement, and self-stimulatory patterns; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 1 in every 68 children, that is 1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls, in the United States are on the autism spectrum; and

WHEREAS, The CDC's findings, demonstrating a significant increase in the prevalence of autism, echoes the findings from the Pennsylvania Bureau of Autism Services' 2014 Pennsylvania Autism Census led by the ASERT Collaborative at Drexel University, which found that the number of Pennsylvanians with autism receiving services nearly tripled from 2005 to 2011; and

WHEREAS, If the CDC's prevalence rate of 1 in 68 were applied to the 2014 Pennsylvania Autism Census there could be an additional 130,000 individuals in Pennsylvania who have either been misdiagnosed, remain undiagnosed or are not receiving services; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 Pennsylvania Autism Census found from 2005 to 2011 there was a 116% increase in the number of Philadelphians receiving autism services; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 Pennsylvania Autism Census signals a looming crisis as the number of adults with autism in Pennsylvania is projected to increase by 20,000 individuals by the year 2020. This is especially concerning since there are few services

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 150026 continued

currently available for adults and access to services is challenging due to limited funding; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is recognized as an early leader in recognizing and addressing autism as an emerging public health issue and under the Bureau of Autism Services has established structures for improved research and public education models, and was among the first in the nation to create several models to support adults with autism; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has been recognized as one of the top ten cities to live in if you are diagnosed with autism; and

WHEREAS, Although tremendous progress has been made in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia, individuals with autism are becoming increasingly more involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, they face high levels of unemployment; families continue to struggle to navigate a complex world of services; they struggle to secure appropriate housing, best practices continue to be underutilized and opportunities for true community inclusion are often limited; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Autism Project, conducted in partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, created a City-wide taskforce to examine the quality of, and access to, services and supports for individuals and families in Philadelphia who are living with autism; and

WHEREAS, Over 130 diverse community stakeholders including: advocates, self-advocates, family members, administrators, service providers, City agency personnel, educators, policy-makers and researchers, came together for three all day meetings to generate a strategic plan to improve the quality of life of Philadelphians living with autism; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia stakeholder group identified ten themes in need of improvement, including: 1) Clinical Concerns Across The Lifespan, 2) Family Support, 3) Post-Secondary Educational & Employment Opportunities, 4) Underserved Communities, 5) Capacity Building & Workforce Development, 6) Enhancing Community Inclusion For Individuals & Families With Autism Spectrum Disorders, 7) Supports for Adults, 8) Child Welfare & Criminal Justice Systems, 9) Education, 10) Blending Of Funding Streams; and

WHEREAS, Stakeholders' generated over 100 initiatives, that if implemented, will substantially improve the quality of life of individuals with autism and bring greatly needed support to family members and others responsible for their care; and

WHEREAS, These initiatives were prioritized into three categories based on the time and resources required for successful implementation. Philadelphia stakeholders voted to generate a list of their top priority initiatives in each of the three categories. The priority

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 150026 continued

recommendations and full details regarding all aspects of the Philadelphia Autism Project are included in the Final Report; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on the Disabled and Special Needs is hereby authorized to hold public hearings regarding the Philadelphia Autism Project's strategic plan for advancing access to, and quality of, services and supports for individuals and families living with autism.

FURTHER RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That in furtherance of such an investigation, the Committee is hereby authorized to issue subpoenas as may be necessary or appropriate to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 150026 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-second day of January, 2015.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Brien

Sponsored by: Councilmembers O'Brien, Goode, Bass, Greenlee, Tasco, Council President Clarke, Councilmembers Oh, Kenney, Johnson, Jones, Neilson, O'Neill, Squilla and Henon