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## Christie Administration Announces \$2.5 Million in Grants to Expand Autism Research, Treatment and Services

New Jersey Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd today announced \$2.5 million in grant funds to advance research, treatment and prevention of autism. The funding went to medical schools, universities, a hospital and a specialty medical center.

The Governor's Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism awarded grants for a variety of projects including: testing for genetic abnormalities, analysis of special transportation services for those with autism, and an examination of video as an interventional therapy.

"New Jersey continues to be a national leader in our commitment to find new and innovative ways to help New Jersey families affected by autism," said Commissioner O'Dowd. "These grants will help us better understand autism and allow families with special needs children to benefit from the excellent research New Jersey institutions offer."

A primary goal of these awards is to foster innovations that lead to clinical impact and therefore improvements for individuals and families.

The grant awards are:

- \$400,000 to Rutgers University's Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Brunswick to study autism-linked stress at the cellular level and initial testing of therapeutic strategies
- \$400,000 to Rutgers University Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Piscataway to study human stem cells from individuals with autism in order to determine metabolic abnormalities that may contribute to autism and have the potential to be reversed through the use of pharmaceuticals
- \$399,558 for the Center for Neurological and Neurodevelopment Health II in Gibbsboro to test for specific genetic abnormalities, assess for their clinical manifestations, and discover new biological causes of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) and associated complications
- \$398,908 to Rutgers University Robert Wood Medical School in Piscataway to provide a new objective instrument that detects micro-movements present in social behaviors with the potential of leading to earlier diagnosis of autism, using the standardized structures of the Autism Diagnosis Observation Schedule (ADOS), a reliable instrument based on observation
- \$398,282 for Rutgers University's Center for Advanced Infrastructure & Transportation in Piscataway to perform an assessment to aid adults on the autism spectrum in finding safe, accessible and appropriate paratransit transportation services

- \$397,547 to Saint Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick to analyze early electroencephalogram (EEG) features to predict risk of ASD and Related Disorders in Premature and low birth weight infants
- \$125,899 to William Paterson University in Wayne to examine imitation from video in children with ASD with a controlled experiment to support, or not, the proliferation of video and touchscreen based imitation interventions for ASD

In addition to supporting research, treatment and prevention, the Department works to connect families affected by autism to programs and services.

The Department's Early Intervention System helps children reach their full potential by minimizing the effects of delays or diagnosed conditions, like autism, at the earliest stages. This program supports families with children from birth to age 3 who are in need of speech, physical therapy or other services necessary. For more information about these services, please visit:

<http://nj.gov/health/fhs/eis/index.shtml>.

An important way the Department connects parents to services is through New Jersey's electronic Autism Registry. The Registry refers families to the appropriate diagnostic, treatment and support services in their communities. The Autism Registry requires medical professionals to register the children they are diagnosing with autism. Approximately 12,400 children are registered.