

Christie Administration Announces \$3.2 Million in Grants for Autism Medical Homes, Expansion of Autism Research

New Jersey Health Commissioner Cathleen Bennett today announced \$3.2 million in grant funds for Autism Health Needs Medical Homes and advanced research in the understanding, evaluation and treatment of autism. The funding went to medical schools, universities and hospitals.

“These grants enhance the state’s commitment to find new and innovative ways to help New Jersey families affected by autism,” Commissioner Bennett said. “These grants will help us better understand Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and allow our families with special needs children to benefit from the best research and services New Jersey has to offer.”

The grant awards are:

- \$400,000 to Hackensack University Medical Center to provide *Comprehensive Service Provision and Care Coordination for Adolescents and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Hackensack University Medical Center is one of three [Autism Medical Homes](#) in the state that are working toward improving health outcomes for adolescents and young adults with ASD by reducing unmet needs for specialty services and promoting coordination among primary care providers, subspecialists and ASD providers to treat the whole person.
- \$400,000 to Children's Specialized Hospital in Mountainside, also an Autism Medical Home, for *Autism Medical Home Transition Collaborative: Partnering Pediatric and Adult Care*, which aims to improve access to services and health outcomes while providing a smooth transition to adult health care services to adolescents and young adults with ASD through coordination among providers and evidence-based practices.
- \$399,875 to the New Jersey Institute of Technology to use neuroimaging to study the brains of children with autism to answer why this disorder is more prevalent in boys and to identify key brain properties that may be helpful for early diagnosis of autism.
- \$400,000 to Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) to conduct a study using innovative genetic and molecular technologies to provide novel insights into the development of clinical interventions to help improve the cognitive ability and quality of life for patients with autism.
- An additional \$399,751 to Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences to study markers of autism risk using sophisticated medical testing in early development leading to a better understanding of impacts and how to individualize treatment.
- \$400,000 to Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia for research that focuses on creating low-cost, efficient tools for the measurement of motor behavior (including motor delays,

instability in standing or walking, and poor handwriting), developing automatic ways to assess ASD risk, studying individual variations between different people with ASD, and measuring individual responses to treatment.

- \$400,000 to Saint Peter's University Hospital to study children with ASD who also have additional medical conditions that affect other organs, not just the brain. Symptoms involving multiple organs may serve as a bio marker that can hold the key to understanding the complex medical conditions found in these children. The study aims to show how the biomarkers are useful for assessing clinical outcomes and responses to first line interventions and may also lead to new treatment measures.
- \$392,304 to Rutgers, the State University for a study that focuses on identifying the potential barriers in pedestrian infrastructure design for individuals with ASD. Pedestrian skills are the prerequisite skills needed for community integration and for using fixed route public transportation services. Through identifying the potential barriers in pedestrian infrastructure design, modifications can be made to the designs that are more conducive to those with autism and other developmental disabilities.

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