



Senate Gives First-Round Approval to Sen. Scott T. Rupp's Proposed Bill to Secure Insurance for Autism-Related Services

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Senate gave first-round approval today (3/24) in support of a bill proposed by Senator Scott T. Rupp, R-Wentzville, that would require health carriers to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for individuals up to 18 years of age.

Senator Rupp's [Senate Bill 167](#) would build upon the state's commitment to support and empower families living with autism. The proposed legislation would require most health carriers that issue or renew health benefit plans to provide coverage for diagnosis and treatment of individuals up to age 18 and would restrict health carriers from refusing to issue or renew coverage based solely on the fact that an individual is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

The proposed insurance coverage would include a physician or psychiatrist's referral of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapy — up to \$55,000 per year for individuals up to age 14.

“This is an absolute priority for families living with autism who need access to vital healthcare services for their children affected by this troubling disorder,” Sen. Rupp said. “By passing this bill, we will be providing real help — and hope — to these families.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism strikes one out of 150 children in this country — more than AIDS, juvenile diabetes and cancer, combined.

Last year, Sen. Rupp successfully advanced legislation to enhance autism healthcare services in Missouri, including the creation of a statewide commission to address the needs of individuals affected by autism spectrum disorders.

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