



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

JEFFERSON CITY — Most health insurance carriers would be required to provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders for individuals up to 18 years of age under a bill sponsored by Senator Scott T. Rupp, R-Wentzville, passed by the Missouri Senate today (4/23).

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 would serve as a giant step forward in helping literally thousands of families have affordable access to the necessary medical interventions required for children with autism,” Sen. Rupp said. “Autism takes an emotional toll on families and in many cases creates a tremendous financial burden for families seeking to secure vital health care for their children.”

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.

The bill now moves to the House for equal consideration.

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