

1 S.243

2 Introduced by Senator Giard

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Education; autism spectrum disorders

6 Statement of purpose: This bill proposes to:

7 (1) create a council on autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to include the
8 directors of six newly created regional centers on ASD, family members of
9 individuals with ASD, legislators, and agency personnel;

10 (2) direct the council to establish six regional centers on ASD in
11 geographically diverse areas of the state by selecting one or more
12 Vermont-based nonprofit entities to develop and operate the centers pursuant
13 to a contract with and funding from the agency of human services;

14 (3) require the regional centers to provide lifelong support and services to
15 children and adults with ASD and their families, including vocational and
16 other supports for individuals with ASD as they transition to adulthood;

17 (4) designate the New England Autism Center as the entity to develop and
18 operate the first of the six regional autism centers, which shall serve as a pilot
19 program;

1 (5) appropriate \$100,000.00 for the benefit of the New England Autism
2 Center in connection with the first year of its contract with the agency of
3 human services; and

4 (6) dissolve the Vermont inter-agency autism spectrum disorder planning
5 advisory committee.

6 An act relating to the creation of six regional centers to provide lifelong
7 support to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and their families and
8 to the creation of a Vermont council on autism spectrum disorders

9 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

10 Sec. 1. 3 V.S.A. chapter 75 is added to read:

11 CHAPTER 75. AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

12 § 5001. VERMONT COUNCIL ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

13 (a) Creation and membership. A Vermont council on autism spectrum
14 disorders is created and shall have the following members:

15 (1) the directors of the regional centers on autism spectrum disorders
16 created in section 5002 of this chapter;

17 (2) one member of a family of an individual with autism spectrum
18 disorders (ASD) from each of the six regions of the state served by a regional
19 center, selected by the Vermont Family Network;

20 (3) one representative selected by the speaker of the house;

21 (4) one senator selected by the committee on committees;

1 (5) the secretary of human services or the secretary's designee;

2 (6) the secretary of commerce and community development or the
3 secretary's designee;

4 (7) the commissioner of education or the commissioner's designee;

5 (8) one representative of the Vermont developmental disabilities
6 council, selected by the council's board of trustees; and

7 (9) one representative of the Vermont medical society, selected by the
8 society's council.

9 (b) Duties. The council shall:

10 (1) establish six regional centers on autism spectrum disorders, which
11 shall operate pursuant to section 5002 of this chapter, by selecting one or more
12 Vermont-based nonprofit entities, pursuant to a process developed by the
13 council, to develop and operate the centers;

14 (2) provide guidance and other assistance to the regional centers when
15 requested;

16 (3) oversee the work performed by the regional centers;

17 (4) arrange for an annual financial audit of the regional centers, which
18 shall be conducted according to generally accepted government auditing
19 standards and made publicly available on the web sites maintained by the
20 agency of administration, the agency of human services, the agency of
21 commerce and community development, and the department of education;

1 (5) examine and make recommendations to the general assembly and
2 state agencies regarding matters of state policy regarding the care, treatment,
3 and quality of life of individuals with ASD and their families; and

4 (6) report to the governor and the general assembly between January 1
5 and January 15 each year regarding its activities and the activities of the
6 regional centers.

7 (c) Organization. The council shall elect from among its members a chair
8 and other officers, who shall serve for terms of two years. Officers may serve
9 for multiple terms.

10 (d) Meetings. The council shall meet monthly. The secretary shall keep
11 minutes of each meeting and post them on the web sites maintained by the
12 agency of administration, the agency of human services, the agency of
13 commerce and community development, and the department of education.

14 (e) Term of membership. The six family members shall serve staggered
15 terms of three years each and may serve for multiple terms. Legislative
16 members shall be appointed at the beginning of each biennium.

17 (f) Expenses and per diem. The six family members shall be reimbursed
18 for their travel expenses by the agency of human services from general
19 appropriations annually made to it. Legislative members shall receive per
20 diem compensation and expense reimbursement pursuant to 2 V.S.A. § 406.

1 § 5002. REGIONAL CENTERS ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

2 (a) Six regional centers, established pursuant to section 5001 of this chapter
3 and which shall provide lifelong services in geographically diverse areas of the
4 state for Vermont children and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)
5 and their families, shall:

6 (1) create and maintain a centralized, publicly available information
7 system regarding evidence-based diagnostics, prognosis, options for treatment
8 and education, available resources, parent support programs, and community
9 activity programs in Vermont;

10 (2) provide, coordinate with other entities to provide, or provide
11 consulting services to schools and other entities to ensure individualized
12 supports and services to individuals with ASD and their families, including:

13 (A) systematic evidence-based instructional programs,
14 comprehensive structured learning environments, specific curriculum content,
15 and functional approaches to behavioral issues;

16 (B) transitional plans related to socialization, job training and
17 employment, and independent living in a community-based format to assist
18 individuals with ASD to move from secondary school into the community;

19 (C) community-based services to individuals with ASD who are 23
20 years old and older, to individuals with ASD who will soon be 23 years old,

1 and to their families, including residential, medical, job training, and
2 employment support services and socialization programs;

3 (D) training and support necessary to ensure that families of
4 individuals with ASD can assume case management responsibilities if they
5 desire to do so; and

6 (E) mediation and advocacy services, as needed, to ensure that
7 individuals with ASD and their families receive appropriate supports and
8 services;

9 (3) assist schools, colleges, and other entities to develop and implement
10 education and training programs necessary to ensure a sufficient number of
11 well-trained and experienced staff for schools, health service entities, and
12 social and housing agencies;

13 (4) provide or coordinate with other entities to provide information to
14 the general public about ASD and the special needs of individuals with ASD;

15 (5) promote coordination and collaboration among educational and
16 social service agencies and independent providers;

17 (6) seek increased resources for individuals with ASD and their families
18 by accessing federal and state grants and pursuing development opportunities
19 through foundations, corporations, and planned giving; and

20 (7) provide quarterly reports to the Vermont council on autism spectrum
21 disorders that include data and are in a format prescribed by the council.

1 (b) Each center shall be incorporated as a nonprofit entity working in
2 partnership with the state and shall be advised by an independent board of
3 trustees. The board of trustees shall select the center's director.

4 (c) The agency of human services shall enter into a contract with the
5 nonprofit entity or entities selected pursuant to section 5001 of this chapter to
6 develop and implement the programs and services required by subsection (a) of
7 this section.

8 (d) The agency of human services shall provide all funds necessary for the
9 centers' operation and for the annual audit required by section 5001 of this
10 chapter from general fund dollars and Medicaid revenues.

11 Sec. 2. VERMONT COUNCIL ON AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS;

12 INITIAL MEETING

13 The secretary of administration shall call the first meeting of the Vermont
14 council on autism spectrum disorders to occur no later than September 1, 2010.

15 At the first meeting, the council shall elect its chair and other officers from
16 among its membership, set the date and location, and develop an agenda for the
17 next meeting.

18 Sec. 3. IMPLEMENTATION

19 (a) On or before July 1, 2012, the Vermont council on autism spectrum
20 disorders shall select and the agency of human services shall enter into all

1 necessary contracts with the nonprofit entity or entities that will develop and
2 operate the six regional centers required by Sec. 1 of this act.

3 (b) On or before July 1, 2013, the selected entity or entities shall have
4 developed and begun operating the six regional centers.

5 Sec. 4. PILOT REGIONAL CENTER ON AUTISM SPECTRUM
6 DISORDERS; NEW ENGLAND AUTISM CENTER

7 On or before December 31, 2010, the agency of human services shall enter
8 into a contract with the New England Autism Center to develop and operate
9 the first regional center on autism spectrum disorders as a pilot project serving
10 the Addison County and Chittenden County region.

11 Sec. 5. APPROPRIATION

12 The sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the general fund in fiscal year
13 2011 to the agency of human services for the New England Autism Center;
14 provided the funds shall not be paid to the New England Autism Center until it
15 has entered into the contract required by Sec. 4 of this act.

16 Sec. 6. VERMONT INTER-AGENCY AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER
17 PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE; DISSOLUTION

18 The Vermont inter-agency autism spectrum disorder planning advisory
19 committee is dissolved.

20 Sec. 7. EFFECTIVE DATE

21 This act shall take effect on passage.